THE Way of the Churches OF CHRIST IN *NEW-ENGLAND*.

OR,

THE VVAY OF CHURCHES walking in Brotherly equality, or co-ordination, without Subjection of one Church to another.

Measured and examined by the Golden Reed of the Sanctuary.

Containing a full Declaration of the Church-way in all Particulars.

By Mr. J. COTTON, Teacher of the Church at *Boston* in *New-England*.

1 THESS. 5. 22,23.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good; Abstain from all appearance of evill.

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JOHN CARTER BROWN.

¶ The Epiſtle to the READER,

ſatisfying his deſire of a fuller *Declaration of the Church-way.*

ALthough our *Brethren of a different judgement from* that way, *have not all this while, held forth unto us,* What diſcipline *they intend; nor yet have pointed us to any* Platforme *ſetled in adjacent Kingdomes; but rather have lured off our eye, with intimations that they intend ſome* variation: *yet how many, how long, have even dulled our eares with* * expoſtulations *for a* fuller declaration of our ſelves? *Whoſe hands they know*) *are much bound up, and our* ſingle *ſelves in an incapacitie to be repreſentative of others. The unwillingneſſe of* Licencers *to licence our tracts, and the earneſt endeavours of ſome to move complaints againſt two or three of our moſt moderate books, that with hard travell gat a convoy of* Licences, *to cut through the Preſſes, are not dumb witneſſes how much our way is barred, and our hands tyed ſhort.* * *And for* plaintiffs *to burne records, or to* lock *up records, and then to importune the* Defendents *to produce thoſe records, are two things that cannot*

* So that School-Maſter *Efflaſitaſti quotidiano convitio ut libros emittere, &c. Quintil. lib.* 1.

* *White's* way to the Church, *Bernards* look beyond *Luther.*

not in our apprehenſion be ſaid to hold no analogie. Yet with much ſweat, and wiles, ſome meſſengers have got through that Court of Guard, to anticipate, or ſatisfie (if it might be) thoſe clamourers for a larger Narration.

1. *The* 32. *Queſtions, or* Church-government, and Church-Covenant, *done by ſome* Elders *of* N. E. *they have had; with ſeconds of frequent intimations,* that wee hold with the Churches of New England.

2. *The* Apologeticall Narration *they have had, with our generall approbation of it.*

3. *Mr.* Cotton *of the* Keys of the Kingdome of heaven they have had, *with our Brethrens Epiſtle to it, how farre they approve it.*

4. The Reaſons of the diſſenting Brethren *are in Print.*

5. *Wee have been enformed that thoſe our Brethren formerly have tendered themſelves, that in caſe they might be put into a* Committee, *or like meet poſture for ſuch a worke, they would bring in the whole frame of their judgements in a body, with their grounds and reaſons.*

6. *That now very lately they gave in ſeven propoſitions to be diſcuſſed, with promiſe of more. But neither of them was debated. Which wee alledge rather to vindicate our ſelves of that praticular charge, then to blame men whoſe reaſons wee know not.*

7. *With much adoe wee have preſented you with a* fuller declaration of all our way, according to the Scriptures, *in this learned, yet modeſt Treatiſe of* The Way Of The Churches Of Chriſt In New-England, *&c.* Written and ſent over by Maſter Cotten. *And wee doe in this Epiſtle certifie our aſſent thereunto, ſaving that wee doe not yet fully cloſe with ſome expreſsions* paſſim *in the Book, before ſome of which wee minded it to note a* * *in the Margin*

Margin. This we could not but ſay and doe (pace tanti authoris) *or wee could not aſſert the Booke. If all things in this Treatiſe, as now printed, doe not anſwer punctually word for word, to the firſt written Copie, let the reverend Authour, and the candid Reader pardon us, becauſe wee had not the* faireſt *Copie, nor knew wee, till the Book was neer done, that there was a better to be had, nor to this day yet ever ſaw it.*

Therefore wee were forced to ſhift with this, ſo as to keep the mind of the Authour, make it conſtare ſibi, *and by an* interpretative *leave in his abſence, not only to doe as wee would be done by, but alſo as he himſelfe would have done* (*wee are confident*) *if he had been in our caſe, or preſent here.*

Leaſt any ſhould imagine, that every thing in the Keyes *doth not fit all the* Wards *in this Treatiſe to an haire, wee will here inſert Maſter* Cottons *own words, in his Letter comming from him in* New-England *to our hands in the very nick of time, whiles this Epiſtle lay under the Preſſe;* viz. "If you think the Draught of Church-Diſcipline, which "was ſent over in your Ship, varieth from that of the "Power Of The Keyes, ſent over the yeare after; "you may have ſome occaſion ſo to conceive from "ſome difference of expreſſion in Logicall Termes, "but not a jote in any Doctrine Of Divinitie, or "Church-Practiſe. *So* Maſter Cotton *in his Letter to* Maſter R. M.

Diverſe Objections formerly laid againſt the Printing of this Book (*to the ſadding of the Authour.*) Some *whereof are now anſwered by the* late ſeaſon of printing it. Others, *by the* neceſſitie *of them, that conſcientiouſly and candidly cry out for* information. Others, *by the* foreprinting *of the* Keyes, *to open the full minde and whole*

ſphere

ſphere of the Authours judgement in this. Others, *by that* putting forth in print *of an anſwer to this Book, before this was mid-wifed by the Preſſe into the world. All reaſon therefore (now it can ſpeake) that it ſhould anſwer for it ſelfe.*

Wee hope wee have ſatisfied the minde of the Authour as well as our owne; and of others too, of the other judgement; eſpecially of thoſe that call for fuller Declarations. *The* Lord *root out of all our hearts the* ſpirit of contradiction; *that wee call not for Books, with a reſolution, rather to* confute *them (as wee imagine) then to* throw downe our ſelves humbly under the power of truth.

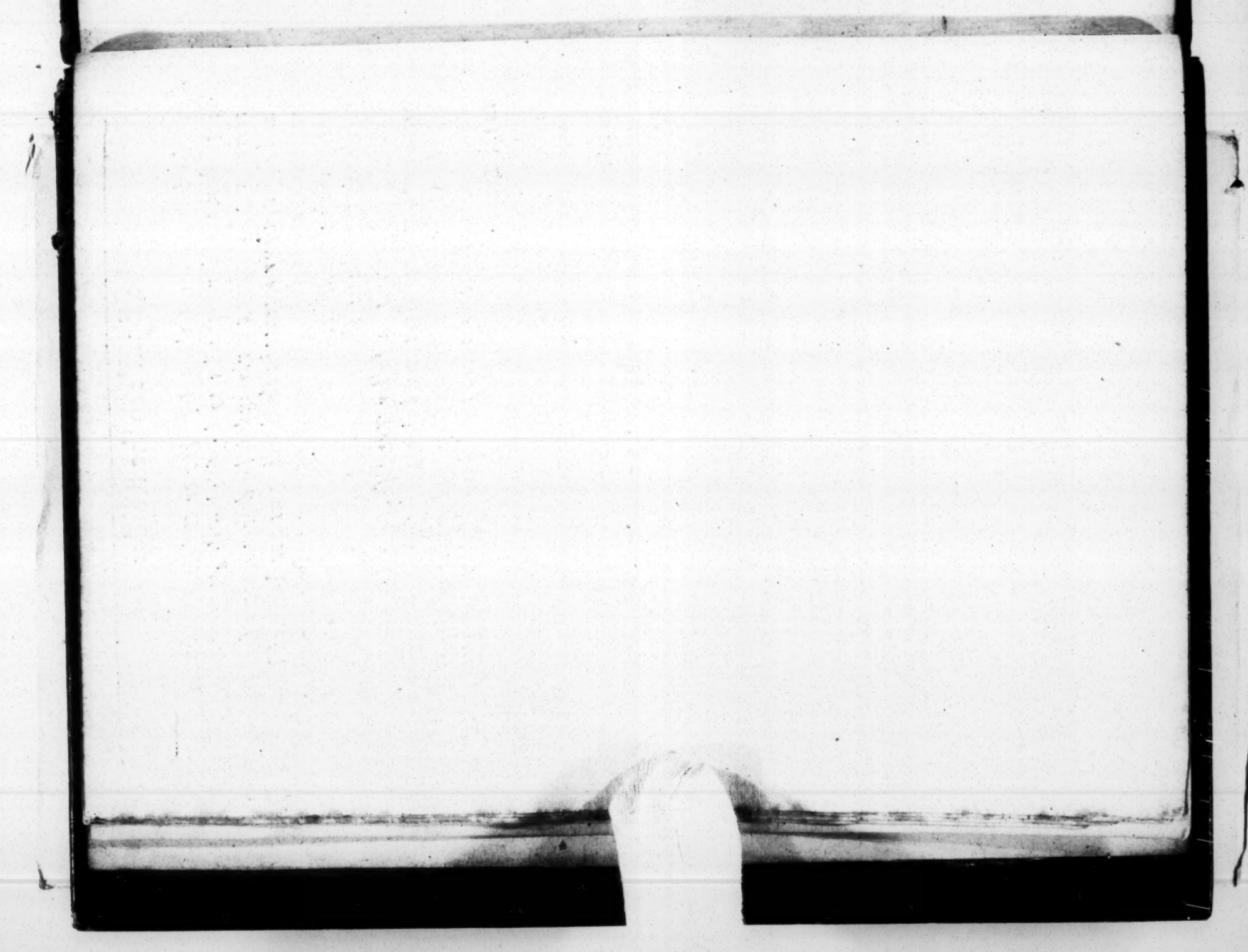
Wee are now fighting Modo militari, *for reformation; let us not therefore fight* againſt *it* more eccleſiaſtico. *With how much gravitie, ſoliditie, and modeſtie, have* Maſter Cotten, *the* Apologiſts, *the* Authours of 32. Queſtions, *or* Church Covenant, *and other milde and judicious Authors written in our cauſe? But with what a different ſpirit have the adverſe part replyed; as if perſonall infectives, and imbittring a ſtile, were* Gods *way of bettering a cauſe, or battering an opinion?*

Here is a Booke ſo grave and ſolid, *that it cannot be juſtly diſpiſed by* ingenuous learned men. *So full of* neceſſary caſes *and truths, that it cannot but bee deſired of thoſe that would be* knowing men. *And* ſo milde and gentle, *that it cannot but be cauſleſly quarrelled, if quarrelled by* Cholerick men. *Had wee not been perſwaded, that it would prove a wellcome Tract on* all hands, *for the reaſons afore-intimated, wee could with our injoyment of the written Copie, well have ſaved this great travell. If it fall out otherwiſe, as it hath with diverſe*

of

of the like nature; Golden Lavers, or Veſſels made Common-ſhores and receptacles to be filled with all filthie contempt; wee ſhall then clearly and fully deſcerne mens ſpirits, and deſcry their intents in challenging us for larger Narrations; *and ſhall beware for time to come, how wee anger them with kindneſſes. But if this be candidly entertained of them, then have they encouraged us in due time to impart (if God permit) a fuller Treatiſe of the ſame ſubject, with amplior demonſtrations, by joynt conſent of the Churches of* Old and New-England · *and meane while, they have abundantly recompenced the labour of love, of theirs in the Lord.*

N. H. I. H.



THE VVay of the Churches of Chriſt in *NEW-ENGLAND*, Meaſured by the Golden Reed of the SANCTUARY.

CHAPTER. I.

The Order of gathering diſperſed Chriſtians into a Church.

PROPOSITION I. SECTION I.

THat the Church which Chriſt in his Goſpel hath inſtituted, and to which he hath committed the keys of his kingdom, the power of binding and looſing, the tables and ſeales of the Covenant, the Officers and cenſures of his Church, the adminiſtration of all his publick Worſhip and Ordinances, is, *Cœtus fidelium*, a Communion of Saints, a Combination of faithfull godly men, meeting for that end, by common and joynt conſent, into one Congregation; which is commonly called *a particular viſible Church* For the Church to the which Chriſt committed the power of binding and looſing, was a company of ſuch (as whereof *Peter* was one,) Beleevers profeſſing that faith on Chriſt, whereon (as on a rock) the Church is built, *Mat.* 16. 18, 19. and ſuch as unto whom *Peter*, or any brother offended, might (in due order) till the offence which any brother had given him & perſiſted in, *Mat.* 18.

17. And the Church of *Corinth* to which the Apoſtle commendeth the caſting out of the Inceſtuous *Corinthian*, (1 *Cor.* 5.) was ſuch a Church, of which the Apoſtle ſaith, *They were Saints by calling, ſanctified by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. and all of them, even the whole Church, did meet together every Lords day, in one place, for the Adminiſtration of the holy Ordinances of God, to publick Edification, 1 *Cor.* 14. 23. & 16. 1, 2. Which frequent meeting every Lords day in one place, to ſuch ends, cannot poſſibly be compatible to any Dioceſan, Provinciall, or Nationall Aſſembly.

PROPOS. 2.

It is the part of all Chriſtians, who look for ſalvation by Chriſt Jeſus, to joyn themſelves (if God give them opportunity) to ſome one or other ſuch a particular viſible Church of Chriſt; for of ſuch a Church as continued in ſuch Church-fellowſhip *Act.* 2. 42. it is written, *The Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved, Act.* 2. 47. And ſeeing there is no holy ordinance of Chriſt, but every Chriſtian ſtandeth in need thereof for his ſpirituall edification in holy fellowſhip with Chriſt Jeſus, (or elſe Chriſt ordained them in vain) and ſeeing withall Chriſt hath committed all his publick holy Ordinances to his Church, it will be needfull for every good Chriſtian, to whom God giveth opportunity, to joyne himſelfe to ſome one or other church of Chriſt, that ſo he may not deprive himſelfe of the benefit and comfort of any of Gods holy Ordinances.

PROPOS. 3.

For the joyning of faithfull Chriſtians into the fellowſhip and eſtate of a church, we finde not in Scripture that God hath done it any other way then by entering all of them together, (as one man) into an holy covenant with himſelfe, To take the Lord (as the head of his church) for their God, and to give up themſelves to him, to be his Church and people; which implyeth their ſubmitting of themſelves to him, and one to another in his fear; and their walking in profeſſed ſubjection to all his holy Ordinances: their cleaving one to another, as fellow-members of the ſame body, in brotherly love and holy watchfulneſſe unto mutuall edification in Chriſt Jeſus: For thus the Lord accepted and entered *Abra-*

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brahams family into Church eſtate, by receiving them and their children into ſuch a Covenant with himſelfe, though in generall termes, yet ſuch as imply the ſubſtance both of Chriſtians and Church duties, *Gen.* 17.7. And after that when the poſterity of *Abraham* had violated this Covenant in *Egypt*, the Lord againe made another Covenant with them, whereby he took them to be a peculiar people unto himſelfe in the Wilderneſſe and Mount of *Sinai*, Exod. 19.1.5. Whence they were called the *Church in the Wilderneſſe*, Act. 7.38. And by reaſon of this Covenant, God calleth the whole body of that people as his owne Spouſe; *I entered* (ſaith he, ſpeaking of that time) *into a Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine*, Ezek. 16. 8. Moreover, the next generation after them, he eſtabliſhed them to be his Church and people, by entring them againe into a Covenant, according to the Covenant made with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, Deut. 29.10. to 13. By vertue of which Covenant, as well as by the former, they were joyned, not onely to the Lord, and to the Officers (the Prieſts and Levites) which he had given them, *Deut.* 12.19. but alſo to mutuall watchfulneſſe over one another, *Levit.* 19.17. *Deut.* 29.18. In ſo much that through their neglect thereof, the ſinne of one *Achan*, was the ſin of all *Iſrael*, Joſh. 7.11:

Which kinde of Covenanting with God, wee finde diverſly tranſlated in Scripture, and every way ſufficient for the conſtituting of a godly ſociety or company to become a Church unto God: Sometimes God, or his Meſſengers in his ſtead, propoundeth and giveth a Covenant unto a people, and they accept it, though not in expreſſe words, yet by ſilent conſent, *Gen.* 17.7. *Deut.* 29.10. to the end of *Chap.* 30. Sometimes the people declare their conſent, and reſtipulation by expreſſe words, *Exod.* 19. 8. *Deut.* 5. 27. and *Joſh.* 24.16, 17, 18. 21, 22, 24, 25. Sometimes they writing and ſealing, *Neh.* 9 38. In all which Covenants, ſometimes they make no expreſſe termes of cleaving to their brethren, but onely in generall termes ſubmitting themſelves to every Ordinance and Covenant of God, (as in the places alledged) ſometimes they expreſſly declare their ſtedfaſt cleaving to their Brethren alſo, and to their Officers, *Neh.* 10.28, 29. & *ver.* 35. to the end the reſt of the people every one might have knowledge they cleave to their Brethren, and entred into an Oath, &c. In ſome we account it all one, and

of like value, when a Covenant of God is propounded and given on Gods part to a people, whether they receive it by ſilent conſent, or by expreſſe termes, either by word of mouth, or by writing and ſeale, and whether their cleaving to their Brethren and Officers, and mutuall watchfulneſſe one over another, be expreſly mentioned, or included onely in their generall profeſſion of ſubjection to all Gods holy Ordinance and Covenant; For we ſee it evident by comparing the former Scriptures, that by any one of theſe wayes a people is received and eſtabliſhed to be a peculiar people and Church unto the Lord, and each of them lay hold of the ſame ſpirituall priviledges, and hold forth the ſame holy duties.

Neither is there any colour to conceive this way of entring into Church eſtate by Covenant, to be peculiar to the Pædagogy of the Old Teſtament; for it is evident by the light of nature, that all civill Relations are founded in Covenant. For, to paſſe by naturall Relations between Parents and Children, and violent Relations between Conquerours and Captives; there is no other way given whereby a people (*ſui Juris*) free from naturall and compulſory engagements, can be united or combined together into one viſible body, to ſtand by mutuall Relation, fellow-members of the ſame body, but onely by mutuall Covenant; as appeareth between huſband and wife in the family, Magiſtrates and ſubjects in the Common-wealth, fellow Citizens in the ſame City: and therefore in the New Teſtament, when a people whom the Apoſtles by their miniſtery had converted, were to be gathered by them into a Church eſtate, what did the Apoſtles elſe but combine them into one body, as one chaſte Virgin and Spouſe unto Chriſt? 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. And how could that (not univerſall, but particular) Church of *Corinth* be offered up in one body, not as many Spouſes, as all the particular members of that Church were by their converſion, but as one Spouſe unto Chriſt, but onely by joyning all together in one Covenant, or Eſpouſage, to worſhip the Lord Jeſus, according to all the Ordinances of his houſe?

PROPOS. 4.

Wee conceive it cannot ſeem unreaſonable that in the ſame way by which particular godly perſons doe enter into the fellowſhip of the Liberty of thoſe holy Ordinances which Chriſt hath appropriated

priated to his Church; in the ſame way it were meet that an whole company of Chriſtians ſhould enter into Church eſtate; for in entring of them into Church eſtate, the Lord calleth as well whole companies, as particular perſons, to enjoy the like liberty of all his holy Ordinances; the enjoyment of like liberty requireth preparation thereunto by the like duty. In the times of *John* the *Baptiſt*, ſuch as were received into Baptiſme, they did firſt make confeſſion of their ſinnes, and therewith of their repentance, and of their faith alſo in him who was to come after him, *Matth.* 3. 6. *Act.* 19. 4, 5. And in the times of the Apoſtles, *Philip* received the Eunuch unto Baptiſme, not untill he had made profeſſion of his Faith in Chriſt Jeſus. *Act.* 8. 37. But now for as much as we all who are borne in Chriſtian Churches, are baptized in our infancy, and ſuch as are baptized infants, are not admitted to the Lords Table in well ordered Churches, till they have approved, and in their owne perſons publiquely confirmed that profeſſion of repentance and faith, which their parents, or others in their ſtead profeſſed, and promiſed for them at their Baptiſme; it cannot be thought unreaſonable, that ſuch a company of godly Chriſtians, having been baptized infants, ſhould now make the like profeſſion of their repentance, before they are admitted into Church eſtate, which others made in the Primitive times before Baptiſme, and all growne up to ripe years are wont publiquely to make, (or at leaſt ought to make) before their admittance to the Lords Supper. Beſides when upon *Peters* confeſſion of his Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, Chriſt ſaid that upon that rocke, or foundation, he would build his Church, *Mat.* 16. 16, 18. doth he not plainly hold forth, that every Chriſtian Church is founded, as on Chriſt; ſo on Chriſt in this way, to wit, on Chriſt believed on by faith, and that faith publiquely confeſſed before God and men?

PROPOS. 5.

To the erecting of a Church, as the preſence of Chriſt is neceſſary for the acceptance of it, ſo the preſence of neighbouring Churches and Brethren, is requiſite to cry, Grace, Grace unto it; For if *Davids* advertiſment be (as it is) neceſſary, and of important weight, *Except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vain that build it*, Pſal. 127. 1. how much more important is it that the Lord

(who alone buildeth his own *Jeruſalem*, Pſal. 147.2.) be ſought unto with unfeigned humiliation and fervent prayer, for his preſence with his people, and acceptance of them in ſuch a worke; and if the Apoſtle *Paul* thought it requiſite to communicate with the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* about his Apoſtolicall doctrine, and proceedings, partly to prevent ſuſpition of diſſent between him and them, leſt by any meanes he ſhould run in vaine; partly to hold forth mutuall communion with them, in giving and taking the *right hand of fellowſhip*, Gal.2.2.9. How much more requiſite will it be, for ſuch as goe about to gather together ſcattered Chriſtians into a Church eſtate, to communicate with the Elders and Brethren of other Churches, craving their preſence, and counſell, and communion in ſo great a work? And ſeeing Chriſtian Magiſtrates being alſo Brethren and members of Churches, are called of God to be Nurſing Fathers unto the Church, *Iſa.*49.23. it cannot but encourage them to take the more ſpeciall notice and care of every Church, and to provide and aſſigne convenient allotments of land for the maintenance of each of them, when in times of peace they are made acquainted with the perſons and proceedings of ſuch as gather into Church-fellowſhip, under the wing of their Government: And yet ſeeing the kingdome of Chriſt is not of this world, nor regulated by the wiſedome of this world, wee doe not doubt but that a Church may be cleerly gathered, and rightly ordered, though they want opportunity, or omit to acquaint the Magiſtrates with their proceedings, eſpecially when Magiſtrates are not acquainted with the Laws of Chriſts Kingdome.

Sect. II.

NOw then to apply all theſe Propoſitions to our preſent order and practice, in the gathering of a Church; thus it is, when many Chriſtians are come over into theſe parts, they deſire to joyne themſelves unto ſome Church or other, according to the ſecond Propoſition, profeſſing that it was the principall end of their comming, to enjoy the preſence of the Lord in the liberty and purity of his Ordinances: And if the company of ſuch as come together, be ſo well knowne one to another, that they are loath to part company, and yet ſo great that they cannot well joyne in any one

one Church already eſtabliſhed, without too much impeachment of their outward eſtate and livelihood, the chiefeſt part of the lands belonging to each Church, being prepoſſeſſed by others before them, they then take that courſe which other companies tooke before them, they conſider of entring into a Church eſtate and fellowſhip amongſt themſelves: And for that end, firſt commending themſelves to the Lord, they inquire out ſome one or other of Eminent gifts, uſually ſuch as have been Preachers of good eſteeme in *England*, who may guide and goe along with them in ſo great an action, and if God ſee good, may afterwards be called to place and Office amongſt them; And then ſuch whoſe hearts God toucheth to goe along with them in this worke, they often meet together about the things of God, and performe ſome duties of Prayer and ſpirituall conference together, till a ſufficient company of them be well ſatisfied in the ſpirituall good eſtate of one another, and ſo have approved themſelves to one anothers conſciences in the ſight of God, as living ſtones fit to be laid in the Lords ſpirituall Temple, which is his Church, according to the firſt Propoſition.

Now becauſe (through the grace of Chriſt) our Chriſtian Magiſtrates are nurſing Fathers to the Church, and the Churches already eſtabliſhed, are carried not onely with a pious deſire to enlarge the kingdome of Chriſt, but alſo with brotherly love to ſuch as intend ſo good a work; thoſe Chriſtians therefore that deſire, to enter into Church-fellowſhip together, doe acquaint the Governour, and ſome of the neereſt Magiſtrates, and thoſe Churches which are next adjoyning to them, with their intentions to enter into Church fellowſhip, and crave the preſence of ſome from amongſt them (at the day appointed, ſome few weeks after) to helpe them with their prayers, and with their counſell, (if need ſhould be) in ſo weighty a buſineſſe, as being themſelves for the moſt part, leſſe experienced in the wayes of Chriſts Kingdome, then thoſe who have gone before them in ſuch a work; as alſo deſiring to approve themſelves and their courſe, to the conſciences of the Brethren of other Churches, that they may more freely give them the right hand of fellowſhip, and ſo receive them to all Brotherly communion in the Lord, amongſt the reſt of the Churches; and this agreeth with the laſt part of the fift Propoſition.

So

So when the day appointed for the Church-gathering is come, the perſons deputed from the neighbouring Churches are preſent, (who commonly be the teaching and ruling Elders) and as many alſo of all ſorts as are willing to partake with them at that time, the whole day is kept as a day of humiliation, eſpecially the former part of it, in ſeeking the face of God in prayer, and preaching the Word, (according to the former part of the fift Propoſition) the Brethren of the Church to be gathered, ſelecting ſome chiefe one among themſelves to be their mouth for thoſe ſervices: which done then on the latter part of the day, one of them appointed and choſen by themſelves to order the worke of the day, ſtandeth up and addreſſeth himſelfe, with the reſt of his Brethren, to make profeſſion of their faith, and repentance, before the Lord, and before the whole Aſſembly; according to the fourth Propoſition.

This done with the ſilent approbation of the whole Aſſembly he propoundeth the Covenant of promiſe, *Eph.* 2. 12. denying alſo any ſufficiency in themſelves to keepe Covenant with God, (as having been tranſgreſſors from their youth up) they profeſſe in the name of Chriſt their acceptance of the Lord for their God, and the Lord Ieſus (the head and Saviour of his Church) to be their King, Prieſt, and Prophet; and give up themſelves in profeſſed ſubjection unto all his holy Ordinances, according to the Rules of the Goſpel; withall they profeſſe their full purpoſe of heart, to cleave one to another in Brotherly love, and mutuall ſubjection, according to God; not forſaking their Aſſembly, (but as the Lord ſhall call) and miniſtring one to another (as becometh good Stewards of the manyfold graces of God) till they all grow up to a perfect man in Chriſt Jeſus.

Having thus, or to the like purpoſe propounded the Covenant himſelfe, with the reſt of the Brethren, who are to joyn in Church-eſtate, they all declare their joynt conſent in this Covenant, either by ſilence, or word of mouth, or writing.

Then the Brethren of other Churches finding the preſence of God accepting them, by the heavenly fire of his Spirit come downe amongſt them in their performance of their holy duties, they appoint ſome from amongſt them, in the name of all the Churches from whence they come, to reach forth unto them the right hand

of

of fellowship, teſtifying their proceedings to have been according to God, and the Churches acceptance of them into brotherly fellowship, and exhorting them to ſtand ſtedfaſt in the Lord, and to grow up in holy fellowship with him, and one with another, and with the reſt of the Brethren of all the Churches, according to theſe beginnings: And ſo Prayers being made unto God for the pardoning and acceptance of this people, and of all the duties of the day; as alſo for his bleſsing upon themſelves, and all the Churches, both in this Countrey, and throughout the world, eſpecially in *England*; a Pſalme of praiſe is ſung.

Queſt. What could be done more, if a Church were to be gathered out of Infidels?

Anſw. 1. If a Church were to be gathered out of Infidels, they were firſt to be converted, that they might become beleevers, and ſo fit materialls for Church-fellowship, before any of theſe could be done by them; whereas theſe here ſpoken of, are perſons converted already.

If it be ſaid again: But are not all baptized perſons fit for Church-fellowship, as all circumciſed perſons were admitted to the Paſſeover?

Anſw. There is a difference between the Paſſeover, whereto all *Iewes* were admitted, young and old, unleſſe defiled with ſome pollution: and the Lords Supper, whereto perſons of growner yeares, and fit to examine themſelves, are invited; and therefore neither children, nor ignorant perſons, nor prophane, nor ſcandalous perſons, are admitted to the Lords Table, nor into Church-fellowship.

If it againe be objected; But are not all baptized perſons Church-members already by their baptiſme?

Anſw. No.

1. Papiſts and other notorious Hereticks are baptized.

2. And many in other Churches have cut themſelves off from the Covenant by their notorious wickeduеſſe and prophaneneſſe, *Pſal.* 50. 16.

3. A Church Relapſed, with all the members of it [illegible] before they can be accepted with God in their Church-fello[illegible]wſhip, are bound to renew their Covenant; which is, as it [illegible]vere, a new entring into Covenant; the ſame which in effe[illegible] is done with us.

4. Though

4. Though godly men baptized members of a pure Church, are to be accounted Church-members as long as they continue their habitation and election to that Church : yet ſeverall baptized perſons broken off from their ſeverall Churches, to which ſometimes they did belong, and now meeting accidentally in one place, are not therefore one Church anew amongſt themſelves, unleſſe they will imagine that *Chimæra* of an univerſall viſible Church.

CHAP. II.

Touching Church-Officers, with their election and ordination.

SECT. 1.

THE Church being thus gathered, as hath been deſcribed, our next care is, that it may be ſupplyed with all thoſe Officers and Members which Chriſt hath ordained to continue in his Church untill his ſecond coming, for they are all given for the edifying and perfecting of his body, untill we all grow unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſſe of Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 4. 11, 12, 13. The Apoſtles, Prophets, and Evangeliſts, they ſtill continue in their writings, to be Maſter-builders of the Churches in all ages, and therefore the Church is ſaid to be built upon their foundation, that is, upon the foundation which they by their writings have laid, *Epheſ.* 2, 20. but in their Succeſſors in the ſame eminent calling they continue not : whence the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of himſelf and *Barnabas*, as the laſt Apoſtles, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9. And when the new *Ieruſalem* (the Church of the *Iewes*) cometh to be planted, it is not ſaid to be planted by new Apoſtles, but by the former twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb, *Rev.* 21. 19. to wit, by them, in reſpect of their Doctrine ſtill left behind them in their writings.

It remaineth therefore, that the ordinary Officers of the Church which are to continue to the comming of Chriſt Ieſus, are either Elders, (whom the Apoſtle calleth alſo Bishops, *Tit.* 1. 5. 7. *Act.* 20. 17. 28.) or Deacons; of Elders he maketh two ſorts, one ſort he calleth

calleth them that rule, the other them that labour in the Word; wehther of Exhortation, as the Paſtors, or of Doctrine, as the Teachers, 2 *Tim.* 5. 17. For the two ſorts of ordinarie preaching Elders, the Apoſtle calleth *Paſtors and Teachers*, Eph. 4. 11. And ſuch ſeverall kindes of labouring in the Word, by the one in a word of Exhortation, by the other in a word of Doctrine, the Apoſtle expreſly holdeth forth, *Rom.* 12. 7, 8. *He that teacheth* (ſaith hee) *let him wait on teaching, and hee that exhorteth on exhortation*; which argueth a difference of their functions by the diſtinction of their proper or eſpeciall actions.

If it be ſaid, the difference of thoſe actions doe not argue a diverſitie of functions, but both teaching and exhorting are co-incident to one and the ſame Office, as being ſeverall actions of ſeverall gifts, not of ſeverall Officers:

Anſw. The contrary is evident from the Text, as may appeare by three ſeverall reaſons from the words of the Text.

Reaſ. 1. From the words which the Apoſtle uſeth, εἴτε διακονίαν, εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν, which doe not diſturbe ſeverall gifts onely, but ſeverall perſons, to whom thoſe ſeverall gifts are ſeverally committed, according as the ſame Apoſtle diſtributeth the ſame divers ſorts of gifts to the ſame divers ſorts of perſons, 1 *Cor.* 12. 8. *To one* (ſaith hee) *is given a word of wiſdome*, (to wit, for direction of practice, whereto the Paſtor attendeth) *to another the word of knowledge* (to wit, for direction of the judgement) whereto the teacher attendeth, and both by the ſame Spirit, who diſtributeth to every man ſeverally, *verſ.* 11.

Reaſ. 2. Though Office be one thing, and gift to diſcharge an Office another, and the actions or exerciſe of every ſeverall gift doht not alwaies argue a ſeverall office; yet in this place it is the ſcope of the Apoſtle to expreſſe the different offices, or functions of Paſtors and Teachers by their different and proper acts; for here he ſpeaketh of the divers members of the Church, as of divers members of the naturall body, who having divers offices, or functions in the body, are to performe different proper actions, according to their different functions; *as wee having many members* (ſaith he) *in one body* (verſ. 4, 5.) *and all the members have not one office*, (as the tranſlator turneth it when the Originall ſaith, have not one action, or practiſe, but both expreſsing the ſame meaning;)

ſo we being many are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another, having then (ſaith he, *ver.* 6.) *different gifts* (gifts comprehending both offices and grace) *whether Prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith, or miniſtery, let us wait on our miniſtery, whether he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation.* And look then, as in the naturall body, it being the action of the tongue to ſpeak, it is his function and office to ſpeak, and not to ſee: and it being the action of the eye to ſee, it is his function to ſee, and not to hear; So it is in the members of the body of Chriſt, it being the action of the teacher to teach, he is to attend unto teaching, not unto exhortation; and it being the action of the Paſtor or Exhorter to exhort, he is to attend on exhortation, not on teaching.

Reaſ. 3. If the Apoſtle ſpeake here onely of ſeverall actions or exerciſes of ſeverall gifts, but both co-incident to the ſame perſon and officer in the Church; why then doth he command the Teacher to wait on teaching? and the Exhorter to wait on exhortation? for he that performeth an action according to this gift, which is not peculiar to his office, but common to him with men of other offices, is never commanded, nor is it his duty to attend or waite on ſuch an action. As if a man have a gift of love, or mercie, or liberalitie, and according to that gift be fit to perform an action of giving Almes, yet he is not commanded to attend or wait upon Almes-giving, unleſſe it be his office as well as his gift?

Object. Attending, or waiting, is not expreſſed in the Originall, but in the tranſlation onely.

Anſw. Though it be not expreſſed in the Originall, it is neceſſarily intended, for either ſuch a word as expreſſeth waiting, or at leaſt the verbe ſubſtantive ἐστω, muſt needs be underſtood, which holdeth forth the ſame ſenſe; *He that teacheth, let him be teaching, he that exhorteth, let him be in exhortation*; which is all one, as let him attend to it, let him make it his proper and conſtant work. So a like example in 1 *Tim.* 4. 15. ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, which is the ſame phraſe, and which is fitly tranſlated, *Give thy ſelf wholly to them*, the ſame with πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ, *ver.* 16. *Continue or dwell in them.*

And indeed experience sheweth, that teaching and exhorting are ſo far different one from another, and flow from ſuch different gifts, that they are ſeldome found, at leaſt in any eminency, both

both of them in one and the ſame perſon: and therefore require ſeveral officers for the diſpenſing of them: you have many men of eminent dexterity for clear opening of a Text, for judicious gathering and handling ſound Doctrine from it; and alſo acute and ſtrong for conviction of a contrary error and hereſie, who yet are very cold in exhortation; and on the other ſide, you have ſome very fervent in exhortation, who are very confuſed and generall and common in teaching.

But beſides this, the need of the Church, and the weight of both the works of teaching and exhorting, calleth for ſeverall officers to attend to both, the explication of Scripture, and of the Principles and Doctrine of Religion ſolidly and diſtinctly, with the diſcuſſion of controverſies, which are included in (διδασκαλιαν ελεγχε) Doctrine and Reproof (2 *Tim.* 3. 16.) well attended too, will take up the whole time and talents of a moſt judicious Divine; and on the other ſide, the direction and inſtruction of the people in matters of practiſe, the reformation of their manners, both in their private carriage, and in their families; as alſo in the Church and Commonwealth; and the ſtirring up of men thereto, with the reproof of all diſorders and abuſes in life and converſation, which are included in προς επανορθωσιν inſtruction and correction, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. theſe well attendeded to, will take up the vigour and ſtrength of the moſt prudent and vigilant Paſtor of any Congregation. All which things conſidered, we have thought it needfull to make uſe of the bounty of the Lord Ieſus, to finish our Churches, (as we bleſſe his Name, moſt of them be) with both theſe ſorts of preaching Elders, Paſtors and Teachers; nevertheleſſe, he that is gifted for both theſe in any good meaſure, let him uſe both; yet attend principally on that, to which he is moſt eminently gifted and called.

Sect. II.

AS for ruling Elders, the ſame Text of Scripture (*Rom.* 12. 8.) ſpeaketh as expreſly for their diſtinct office alſo; for there ſpeaking of the ſeverall members of the body of Chriſt (which is his Church) he directing them to attend to their proper work: as the Teacher to teaching, the Paſtor to exhortation, the Deacon to give with

with ſimplicitie, he directeth alſo the Ruler to rule with diligence: and who is that Ruler in the Church, but the ruling Elder? of whom the Apoſtle ſaith to *Timothy*, *The Elders that rule well are worthy of double honour*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. But, as the wiſdom of man is enmitie to God; ſo the wiſdome and wit of man hath found out many inventions and exceptions againſt every Scripture that holdeth forth this Ordinance.

"*Object.* 1. The Elders the Apoſtle here ſpeaketh of, may be "rulers in the familie, as Parents are rulers to children, husbands "to wives; Maſters to ſervants.

Anſw. The Church and familie are two diſtinct bodies: the Apoſtle ſpeaketh here not of the members of the families, (as ſuch) nor of the functions and duties of familie-members, but of the familie of the Church, and of their functions and duties one towards another: His words are plaine, (*verſ.* 4, 5.) *As wee* (ſaith hee) *have many members in one body, and all the members have not the ſame office; ſo we being many, are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another.* One bodie in Chriſt is not one familie (in Scripture phraſe) but one Church; and of this body of the Church, the members they be, whom *Paul* directeth to the due diſpenſing of their ſeverall functions and gifts; namely, the publique officers of the Church, (Teachers, Paſtors, Deacons and Elders,) to attend upon their proper work, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, *verſ.* 6, 7, 8. and all the reſt of the members to walk in ſuch duties of love and pureneſſe, brotherly kindneſſe and modeſty, diligence and fervency, &c. as are requiſite for every Chriſtian, *verſ.* 9. to the end of the *Chapter*.

" *Object.* 2. But *Paul* ſpeaketh not of lay Elders ruling in the "Church, but of Rulers.

Anſw. Neither do we acknowledge ruling Elders in the Church to be lay Elders properly; for to ſay nothing of the diſtinction between the Clergie and Laytie, which is of a later edition then Apoſtolique times; the ruling Elders being ordained to the Office by the election of the people, and impoſition of hands (as well as the preaching Elders) they are no more lay men, or private Chriſtians, then the Teachers or Paſtors are lay Miniſters; and though the Paſtor and Teacher be either of them Church-rulers, yet the Ruler is here diſtinguished from them, as a diſtinct member attending to his action of rule as his proper function. "*Object.*

" *Obiect.* 3. *Paul* ſpeaketh of ſeverall gifts, not of publike of-
" fices in the Churches, for he ſpeaketh of the ſeverall powers and
" action of all the members of the body of Chriſt; now the of-
" ficers of the Church, they alone are not the body of Chriſt, but
" all the multitude of believers; which of all theſe gifts in thoſe
" times, was not common, as well to the people as to the Mini-
" ſters, and to women as well as to men?

Anſw. 1. *Paul* ſpeaketh as well of publike officers as of particu-lar gifts, as hath been ſhewed by three reaſons above, out of the words of the Text. It is true indeed, he ſpeaketh of particular gifts alſo, not peculiar to any office, but common to all believers, from *verſe* 9. to the end; but gifts are not the members of the body of Chriſt, but the perſons indued with thoſe ſpiritual gifts; neither can it be ſaid, that all the members of the Church have all theſe gifts without manifeſt contradiction to the words of the Text, for then all the members had the ſame power to do all of them the ſame actions, which the Apoſtle expreſly denieth, *verſ.* 4. all the members (ſaith he) have not the ſame action, which is tranſlated office; whence it is, that when he ſpeaketh of different offices, he divideth them by particles of partition, εἴτε εἴτε ὁ ὁ, *verſ.* 7, 8. and he injoyneth each office to attend his owne function, but when he co-meth to ſpeak of the private members, and of the gifts common to them all, he neither maketh any partition of them into ſeverall ſorts, nor bindeth them to attendance on the imployment or exer-ciſe of any ſpeciall gift, as he doth the former.

But that as every truth, ſo every ordinance of God may be con-firmed by two or three witneſſes; there be other Texts of Scriptures which bear witneſſe to,

For ruling Elders, In 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. the Apoſtle telleth the *Corin-thians*, that God hath ſet in his Church ſeveral members: as firſt A-poſtles; ſecondly Prophets; thirdly Teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helpes, governments, diverſities of tongues. Where government is expreſly reckoned amongſt theſe offices, which God hath ſet in his Church for the government thereof, long before it injoyed civill Magiſtracie, and therefore he meaneth ſpiritual government, or Church rulers.

Obiect. 1. But theſe governments are ſpiritual gifts, not ſpirituall offices or adminiſtrations.

Anſwer,

Anſw. That they were gifts we willingly acknowledge, becauſe all the offices and officers of the Church were given to the Church as well as the ſpirituall gifts and graces, whereby they do execute thoſe offices; for ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, When Chriſt aſcended up on high, he gave gifts to men.

What gifts? ſome to be Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Evangeliſts, ſome Paſtors, and Teachers, *Eph.* 4. 8. 11. but yet governments, and all the reſt there mentioned are ſpirituall offices, as well as ſpiritual gifts, as will appear from the context; for the Apoſtle in this Chapter, putteth a manifeſt difference between ſpiritual:

1. Gifts and Graces, χαρίσματα, making the holy Ghoſt the giver of them, *verſ.* 6.

2. Adminiſtration, or Miniſters or Officers, διακονίαι: making the Lord Ieſus the giver and inſtitutor of them, *verſ.* 5. as he doth alſo, *Epheſ.* 4. 8. 11.

3. Operations, efficacies, or ſucceſſes of their adminiſtrations, making the Father (the foundation of all power) the giver of them, *verſ.* 6.

Now having ſpoken of the end for which ſpirituall gifts are given, *verſ.* 7. he reckoneth up nine of thoſe ſeverall ſpirituall gifts, *verſ.* 8, 9, 10 he declareth them to be given to ſeverall members of the Church (not all to any one) that ſo every member might ſtand in need of the helps and gifts one of another; and thus having diſcourſed of the variety of ſpirituall gifts and their uſe, he cometh in *verſ.* 28. to 31. to declare the variety of ſpiritual adminiſtrations (that is, Miniſteries, or offices) which God hath ſet in his Church, and reckoneth up eight. Firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, under whom your Evangeliſts are comprehended, as being of equall rank with them: thirdly Teachers, under whom he includeth Paſtors alſo, the office of both whom, was to teach or practiſe in the Church; after that miracles, or as the word in the Originall is, powers, to wit, to caſt out Devills, or to do the like works; then gifts of healing, helps, (opitulations) that is, Deacons, governments (who elſe can they be but governing Elders? for we hear of teaching Elders before;) laſtly, the gifts of tongues, true it is indeed, the Apoſtle reckoned up three of theſe before for ſpirituall gifts, χαρίσματα *verſ.* 9, 10. Miracles, or powers, gifts of healing, kinds of tongues; but here he reckoneth them

them, not as ſpirituall gifts, and graces, for that were a tautology and unſutable to the method of his diſcourſe, but ſpeaketh o them as ſeverall functions or offices, wherein theſe gifts were exerciſed.

" *Object.* 2. But if theſe Governments were Offices or functions " they were extraordinary and ſo are now ceaſed, as gifts of " tongues, and healing and miracles be.

Anſw. Not ſo, for no offices are ceaſed, but ſuch as had their chiefe uſe, not for beleevers in the Church, but for unbeleevers out of the Church; but governments are of perpetuall neceſſary uſe in the Church, even as teachers and helpers unleſſe wee ſhall ſay that Anarchy were fitter for a ſetled Church government.

" *Object.* 3. But why may not theſe Governours be the Paſtors " in the Church, who have received an ordinary power of Go- " vernment in the Church?

Anſw. The order in which the Apoſtle reckoneth theſe governments, will not ſuffer that; for here the Apoſtle reckoneth five ſeverall rankes, the former expreſly precedent in order before the other; *God* (ſaith he) *hath ſet in his Church*; Firſt, *Apoſtles*; ſecondly, *prophets*; thirdly, *Teachers*; after that *Miracles*, which is a fourth ranke; then in the fift place, *gifts of healing, and helpes, governments, diverſity of tongues.* Now if by *Government*, had been meant *Paſtors*, he would not have reckoned them in a lower order, ſo farre after *Teachers*, ſeeing they are of the ſame rank with them.

" *Object.* Why, but here helpes or Deacons are ſet before Go- " vernments; which argueth the Apoſtle did no regard to rank " them in due order.

Anſw. It is evident by the words of order, which the Apoſtle uſeth, that he intendeth to reckon the foure firſt ſorts in their due order, and the fift ſort of them all in a latter order after the former, though in a promiſcuous manner, without reſpect of order amongſt themſelves; for ſo he ſaith; Firſt, *Apoſtles*, ſecondarily, *prophets*; Thirdly, *Teachers*; after them *Miracles*; then *gifts of healing, helpes, Governments, diverſitie of tongues. As Apoſtles* are before *Prophets*, ſo are *Prophets* before *ordinary teachers, the teachers* before *workers of Miracles, the Maricles* before them that have *the gifts of healing*; for the *gifts of healing* follow after *workes of maricles*, with a note of order, *Then.* But all theſe laſt foure, *gifts of healing helpes, Governments, diverſities of tongues*, are reckoned without reſpect of

order amongſt themſelves. What order is due to them, is not expreſſed in this Scripture, though it be in ſome other, (at leaſt for ſome of them) but cleare it is, all theſe laſt foure ſorts, are reckoned in order after the firſt foure ſorts.

" *Object.* 4. But it may be the Church, in which the Apoſtle " ſaith all theſe members are ſet, is not meant every particular " Church, but the Catholick Church; for every particular Church "had not Apoſtles and Prophets.

Anſw. It is true, every particular Church had not ſeverall Apoſtles, apart by themſelves, nor was it needfull they ſhould, after that Churches were once planted, but every particular Church, had need of his own Governours within it ſelfe, or elſe wee ſhall make one Church ſubordinate to the Government of another, which is incompatible to the Church of the new Teſtament. The Lord having inſtituted and ordained no particular Church; but the Church of a Congregation for the adminiſtration of his Ordinance, unto which Congregationall Church he hath alſo appointed the ſame ſort of Officers, without preferment of one before another,

Object. 5. For humane wiſdome is pregnant and full of obje- " ctions and exceptions againſt the ways, and Ordinances of God: " may be, ſay ſome, theſe Governours are no other but Arbitra- " tors, which the Apoſtle biddeth the *Corinthians* ſet up in the " Church for the deciding of differences amongſt brethren, 1 *Cor.* " 6. 4 But now ſince God hath ſet up Chriſtian Magiſtrates, there " is no more need of ſuch Arbiters to be choſen by each Church " to compound their difference.

Anſw. Theſe Arbiters in the Church had not place or office of Government, but of Counſell only, to direct brethren in the judgment of right and wrong, equitie and inequitie; nor was ſuch a power of ſuch Arbitration any ſpeciall gifts; for the Apoſtle thinketh every member of the Church, even the leaſt capable enough of it, and ſufficient for it, Nor is it well ſaid, ſince God hath ſet up Chriſtian Magiſtrates, there need no Arbiter to be ſet up in the Church, nor Church Governours; For it is plaine, the Apoſtle maketh it a fault or defect in the Church of *Corinth*, that any of their members went to law at all for ſuch ſuites, as the leaſt member of the Church, (if he were called to heare the caſe) might

might arbitrate and determine; and he maketh it a further fault, that *they goe to law under Infideles. Now therefore,* saith he, *there is utterly a fault among you, that brother goeth to law with brother, and that under Infidels,* ver. 6. 7. The former is defect of brotherly love, the latter is a neglect of the honour of Christ, and of his Church: *and before Infidels.* If brother goes to law with brother before Christian Magistrates, the latter of these faults is avoyded, but not the former. Neither may it be thought, as some have done, that the benefit of Christian Magistracy taketh off the necessitie of Church-Government: For the government of the Church, is as the Kingdome of Christ is, not of this world, but spirituall and heavenly. The power of the keys is far distant from the power of the sword: and though one of them may need the helpe of the other, when they goe astray, yet when they are rightly ordered, and administred, the one of them doth not intercept, but establish the execution of the other.

A third witnesse to the office of ruling Elders in the Church, is that well knowne and much agitated Text in *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *The Elders who rule well, are worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in Word and Doctrine.* This text, though it have been much vext and rackt to looke and speake another way; yet when all is done, it still giveth a cleare and stedfast evidence to this office. The most learned Adversaries of this Ordinance would fasten foure other interpretations of the place, and each of them (as they pretend) more pertinent to the scope and sense of the Apostles words, then this of ruling Elders.

" 1. Say they, by ruling Elders may be meant Deacons; for the " Apostle giving *Timothy* to understand, what manner of persons " they be, with whose maintenance the Church is to be charged, " having before informed him of widowes, now telleth him the " Deacons also are to be maintained, yea, and with a double por- " tion above them; and either the Deacons are not to be maintai- " ned at all at the Churches charge, or else the Apostle provideth " for their maintenance in this place, or no where.

Answ. 1. There is no man to be maintained at the Churches charges but either in respect of his present poverty and necessity, or in respect of his office, which calleth him off from the attendance to the maintenance of his private family unto the publik service of

the Church. In the former caſe, if it fall out that the Deacons be in neceſſity, they may be ſupplied with ſome maintenance from the Church, as well as any other of the poore brethren; & ſo, though this Text ſaith nothing concerning them, yet other Scriptures take care for them: for the Deacons, by the very inſtitution of their office, were to take up the function which the Apoſtles laid downe (as over troubleſome and incompatible to their Miniſteriall imployment,) now that which they laid down, was the ſerving of tables, and diſtributing to every brother according to his need, Acts 6.2 with 4.35 if then their own need require they may with the Churches allowance, take themſelves of that ſupply which they diſpoſe to others. But in reſpect of their office, there is little cauſe they ſhould expect maintenance from the Churches charge; for their office takes them very little off from attendance to the maintenance of their own family. Seeing by the Ordinance of Chriſt they ſpend no time to go in and out to collect monies, but only receive what is brought unto them, as an obligation to the Lord, layed down before them every Lords day in the face of the Church, or elſe what is brought home to their own houſes, according to the bills they put in on the Lords day; and look what time they may ſpend in keeping a juſt accompt of what they lay out, or in viſiting any ſick or poore brethren, their time and labour ſpent herein is ſufficiently recompenced by the uſe of the Churches ſtock, or treaſure lying in their hands. Secondly, beſides, this Text calleth for maintenance to thoſe Elders in reſpect of their office of ruling well, but neither are Deacons ſtiled Elders in any place of Scripture, neithe is their office a place of rule but of ſervice to Tables; ſo that this Text will by no force be racked to bear this interpretation

2. Another interpretation is fetched from that which is ſaid to be the proper and uſuall force of the word κοπιᾶν, which is more then ſimply to labour, even to weary a mans ſelf with labour; ſo "that this ſenſe they make o the Apoſtles words, the Paſtours or "Elders that diſcharge their places well, are worthy of double "honour, cheifly they which weary themſelves with labour and "care to teach and admoniſh.

Anſw. κοπιᾶν in the Apoſtles language, doth not note out any intention or labour in ſome above others, but ſimply ſuch pains, in a place ſomewhat parallell to this, 1 *Theſ.* 5.12. where the Apoſtle exhorteth

exhorteth the *Thessalonians* to acknowledge their Ministers and Rulers with singular love for their works sake, he calleth all their Ministers τὺς κοπιῶντας, and maketh their κόπος, the common work and labour of them all. not any intensive or eminent labour of some above others; and in *Rom.* 16. 12. when the Apostle speaketh of some godly women, that either took pains about him, or about other spirituall work, when he speaketh of intensive or eminent pains and labour, he addeth another word to κοπᾶν, that may expresse so much; but if he speak simply and positively of labour, he useth the word κοπᾶν alone, *Salute*, saith he, v. 12) *Tryphena and Tryphosa*, τὰς κοπιώσας κυρίῳ, which is translated simply, *Who labour in the Lord*; but when he speaketh of others, that took more painfull labour, *salute Mary*, vers 6 (saith he) ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν εἰς ἡμᾶς; which bestowed much labour upon us, and *ver.* 12 *salute the beloved*, ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίῳ, which is translated *Who laboured much in the Lord*; and therefore in this Text in *Tymothy*, if we strain not *Pauls* words beyond his wonted meaning, he means no more by Elders οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ then such who labour in word & doctrine, & then he distinguisheth the Elders that rule well, from the Elders that labour in word & doctrine simply by their different acts, about different objects, some Elders being conversant about the well ruling of the lives & manners of the people others being conversant in labour about the word and doctrine.

3. A third interpretation is given of these words, That by Elders ruling well should be meant Pastors, and Teachers, such as were resident, and abiding in the Church, affixed to the place for the rule of it and by κοπιῶντες, those that travelled from place to place, to visit and confirm the Churches. To confirm this sense of κοπᾶν, the place, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10, is quoted, wherto *Paul* saith of himself, περισσότερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα which if he had meant of labour in Word and Doctrine it might have seemed arrogancy in him to preferre himself before the rest of the Apostles in that work, and would have imputed some aspersion of negligence to them; but if it be meant of his labour and travell through many countries and nations, for the spreading of the Gospel, so hee might speak truly; and soberly, that hee had laboured more abundantly then them all: to the same purpose, *Maries* κοπᾶν, and the labour of *Tryphena*, *Tryphosa* & *Persis* are alledged out of *Rom.* 16, 6. 12.

as if the first had travelled much for *Paul*; and all of them had laboured in the Lord, in wayes of travell, far and neer, by private perswasions, to propagate the Gospel.

Answ. This interpretation, is indeed travelled for, and far fetcht, but such is our nature, willing enough to travell far and wide, to avoid the authority of an unwelcome truth; how much neerer at hand & fitter were it, to fetch the Apostles meaning from himself, and to take the sense of his words here, according to the sense and use of the same words in a like place, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. where the Apostles κοπιῶντας, are not travellers abroad, but κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν, labourers amongst you. Their own Pastors, and Teachers, resident with them, and *labourers amongst them. Pauls* labouring more abundantly then all the rest of the Apostles, if it were not in word and doctrine, is impertinently alledged to shew the sense of the word in this place. where he speaks expresly of labouring in word and doctrine: Nor had it been arrogancy in *Paul* to have spoken of his own greater labours, then of his fellow-Apostles in the Ministery of the Gospel, without respect to his travels, for his Ministery was accompanied more then all the rest, with greater afflictions and wrastlings, both within and without: whether he stayed in any place, or travelled abroad; and he might well think it necessary for him (as indeed the law of righteousnesse and gratitude required it of him) to take the more pains for Christ in preaching of the Gospel after his conversion, who had laboured more busily then all the rest against Christ, and against the Gospel before his conversion; nor is κόπος, or κοπιᾶν an usuall word in that language, to expresse travelling to be more then any other labour either of body or mind.

The κόπος or labour of *Mary* doth not appear to be in travell up and down with *Paul*, but rather in some diligent hospitality and service unto him; but whither in travell, or in her house, is not at all expressed in the Word: Sure it is *Paul* denieth the taking of a sister or wife up and down in travell, though he acknowleged it lawfull to have taken a wife, 1 *Cor.* 9. 5. but to have taken a sister along, to have travelled up and down the countries with him, may well be thought to be far from him, who was ever carefull to follow things of good report, and to provide for things honest, not only in the sight of God, but of all men. The labours of *Tryphena*

and

and *Tryphoſa*, and *Perſis*, doe not imply travelling up and downe, but rather their own wraſtlings with ſpiritall conflicts, either in their own hearts, or elſe with other conflicting Chriſtians in th: places where they dwell, to ſettle them in the peace of the Lord Jeſus, according to the ſame ſenſe of the word, *Mat.* 11.28.

The fourth & laſt interpretation of theſe words in *Timothy* (which wee ſee taketh with the moſt judicious amongſt the adverſaries of this Ordinance) is, that here not two ſorts of Elders, but two parts of the office of preaching Elders are ſet forth: The one, good life & good goverment; & the other, good doctrine and painfullneſſe therein; and this latter preferred before the other, as more worthy of due honour and recompence.

Now for anſwer hereunto, it may be conſidered, that good government, either of a mans life, or of the people, or as the Apoſtles words be, *their ruling well*, may either be taken properly and ſtrictly, as *rule* is diſtinguiſhed from *miniſtery* of the word and Sacraments; or more largely for the whole office of a good Elder, *Bene praeſſe*, to be a good preſident. If to *rule well*, be taken in the former ſenſe properly, then it acknowlegeth Elders that attend to *rule*, to be worthy of double honour, without reſpect to their labour, in the *miniſtry* of the Word, which is the ſenſe of the place that wee build upon; for if it ſhould be ſaid, that the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of Miniſters or Preachers, that they *ruling well, are worthy of double honour*, though they doe not labour in Word and Doctrine; the wiſer ſorts of oppoſites doe deſcerne that would not ſuite with the Apoſtles mindes, who would be ſo far from thinking, that *Well ruling*, but not *painfull preaching Miniſters* ſhould be worthy of double honour, that he would account them worthy of little or no honour at all. And they fitly quote for this purpoſe, the place before alledged, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12. where when the Apoſtle calleth for *ſingular love, and honour to their overſeers, for their Works ſake*, he putteth in there, *Labouring amongſt them* (to wit, in the Word) without wch no ſuch reſpect were due to them. They there-
"fore take the Apoſtles words in the latter ſenſe; underſtanding
"by *Well ruling*, the whole office, even all the duties of good preſi-
"dents: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, the *Elders that rule well*, that is,
"who are *good rulers*, and preſidents, *They are worthy of double ho-*
"*nour*; chiefly they who labour in preaching the Word. And they
"give

" give for example this inſtance: *Logicians*, who *reaſon well*, that
" is all good Logicians, are to be honoured, eſpecially thoſe who
" *judge* well, or are judicious where not two ſorts of Logicians
" are held forth, but two duties or faculties of all Logicians, in
" reſpect of which they are to be honoured; the one generall to
" *reaſon well*, the other ſpeciall to *judge well*; and theſe diſpoſed,
" not in a diſtribution but in a comparative ſentence, preferring
" the latter before the former.

Anſw. But neither will this ſenſe ſtand with the Apoſtles words and meaning: for hereupon this abſurdity would follow, that if *well-ruling*, in the former part of the ſentence, held forth generally all the duties of good Miniſters, and *labouring in Word and doctrine*, (in the latter part) one ſpeciall part of their office, then the other good Miniſters, for doing all. Neither doth the inſtance given of *Logicians* helpe: for it may be truly ſaid of *Logicians*; that *Logicians* who *reaſon well*, that is, all good *Logicians*, are worthy of honour, eſpecially they who are judicious, becauſe, if they only reaſon well in invention, though they be not judicious, yet ſuch alſo are commendable. But it's not truly ſaid of Miniſters, that if they rule well, that is, do their office well in diſcipline and *Rule*, though they *labour not in Word and doctrine*, that they are commendable; but otherwiſe, if *Logicians*, be good as well in *judgement* as in *invention*, and ſo perform both the parts of their art well; it may be ſaid indeed, that they are commendable and honourable, but it cannot be ſaid without abſurdity, that ſuch as are *judicious* are more commendable or chiefly to be honoured above thoſe that are both *ingenuous* and *judicious*, both parts are doubtleſſe better then either alone: neither will the abſurdity be helped by ſaying *Logicians* that *reaſon well*, both in *invention* and in *judgement*, are worthy of honour, or double honour, eſpecially they that excell in judgement; for though ſpeech be rationall, yet the life cannot be applied in this Text; for it is not ſaid in the Text, *the Elders that rule well are worthy of double honour, eſpecially they that excell in preaching*, which labour doth not hold forth excellency (as hath been ſhewed before, but only poſitively and ſimply *pains taking*, in preaching, the common act and work of all good Miniſters, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12. The iſſue of all is, that when men of learning and judgement have wearied their wits and ſtrength, to ſhoulder out *ruling Elders* from

from this Text, yet ſuch is the evidence and wiſedome of the holy Ghoſt, in the word, that it may well appeare, the weakeneſſe of God is ſtronger then men, and the fooliſhneſſe of God wiſer then men; the words cannot but approve two ſorts of Elders, and both worthy of double honour, both they that *rule well*, though they labour not in preaching, and eſpecially they that do *labour in preaching*; but this interpretation will by no means ſatisfy ſome of a contrary judgement, for three reaſons, to ſpeak nothing of the fourth, the pretended probabability of other interpretations, which have been refuted already.

"Firſt ſay they, the Text it ſelf clearly renounceth non-preach-
"ing Elders; for both ſorts of Elders ſpoken of, are expreſly ac-
"knowledged in the Text to be worthy of double honour, that is,
"not reverence only, but maintenance at the charge of the Church;
"but that non-preaching Elders ſhould by Gods inſtitution have
"received maintenance at the Churches hand, is a thing ſo ſtrange,
"and unheard of, that untill I ſee it juſtly proved, (ſaith *B. Bilſon*)
"I cannot poſſibly believe it.

Anſw. It is very true, the Apoſtle by double honour, doth not mean reverence onely, but maintenance; But why ſhould it ſeeme ſo ſtrange a thing, and unheard of, that ruling Elders, though not Preachers, ſhould partake in maintenance from the Churches treaſury? do you thinke ſuch men ſpeake in good earneſt, when they ſo ſpeake? whence have the Chancellors, Commiſſaryes, and Officialls, their maintenance, but from the Church? and doe they labour in word and doctrine? are not moſt of them Civilians? and if we may uſe the word without offence, meer Lay-men? but our ruling Elders, wee utterly deny them to bee Lay-men as the word is commonly meant in this controverſie; but Church-officers ſet apart to their office by the election of the people, and by impoſition of hands: but if they were Lay-men (which they are not) yet you ſee it is no ſtrange or unheard of matter, that Churches ſhould be bountifull to the maintenance of ſundry ſorts of Church Rulers, who are meerly Lay-men, as their adverſaryes miſconceive theſe to be, yea, what were the many Cloyſters of Munks, and Friers and Nuns, in the times of Popery? were they Preachers of the Word? were they not Lay men & women? and yet did the Churches of thoſe times grudge them their maintenance upon pretence of

their laity? But the world will love his owne; be there never ſo many idle Droanes, or ſtately Rulers of mans own deviſing, the Church muſt ſupply them not only with maintenance, but with magnificence; but let the Lord appoint *ruling Elders*, according to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, to aſſiſt his Miniſters in the worke of government, that they might attend the more to labour in the word, if they ſhall expect from the Church any maintenance for their works ſake, Oh! that ſeemeth a ſtrange matter, and unheard of from all antiquity, till this preſent age.

"The ſecond Reaſon why lay Elders, (as they miſcall them) "*ruling Elders* (as wee with *Paul* call them) are not meant in *Pauls* "Text, is becauſe *Paul* mentioning the Presbyters but once in all "his Epiſtles, excludeth all lay Elders from that Presbytery, *Neglect* "*not* (ſaith he) *the grace which is in thee, which was given thee by pro-* "*phecy, with impoſitions by the hands of the Presbytery*, 2 Tim. 4.14. "This Chriſtian Presbytery gave impoſition of hands to ordaine "Miniſters; but lay-Elders had no right to impoſe hands to that "purpoſe; therefore Lay-men were none of this Presbytery; for "if the Presbytery be taken for the company of Elders, none were "of that company but ſuch as might give impoſition of hands; or, "if Presbytery be taken for the Office of an Elder, then none might "take that function on him, but muſt receive impoſition of hands, "as *Timothy* did, then Lay-men which neither give nor receive im- "poſition of hands, are wholly debarred both from the degree, "and from the ſociety of the Presbytery, that was in *Pauls* "time.

Our anſwer conſiſteth of three points:

Firſt, *Lay Elders* wee diſclaim, but *ruling Elders*, though not attending to preaching, as they have their election from the people who are the body of the Church; ſo are they ordained and ſet apart from amongſt the people by impoſition of hands of the Officers of the Church, who are the Presbytery, the company of Elders: for by Presbytery, we conceive cannot be there meant the office of an Elder; for he ſpeaketh of ſuch a Presbytery, as laid on hands: now it is not the office of an Elder, but the company of Elders, that lay on hands.

Anſw. 2. When it is ſaid, no man can give what hee hath not received; the light of Nature, the law of *Moſes*, the Goſpel of Chriſt,

Christ, do all of them make a ready answer for us: The law of Nature tels us, It is not necessary, that they that give should alwayes *formally* have before-hand received that power which they give; it is enough if they have received it *virtually*: For instance, a multitude of free people may elect and ordain a king over them, and yet none of them had before hand received kingly power; it is enough they have a virtuall power, to set up and to submit unto any lawfull form of Government, which they see good for themselves in the land. The people of *Israel*, (to wit some in the name of the rest, for all could not at once) impose their hands upon the Levites *Numb.* 8. 10. and yet they were not Levites themselves, nor had received imposition of hands themselves, and yet may nevertheless impose hands upon others. In the Gospel of Christ, the power of the Keys is given to the Church, to *Peter*, not as an Apostle, nor as an Elder, but as a Professt beleever; in the name of believers, and upon occasion of the profession of his faith, *Matth.* 16. 16 to 19. whereupon the binding and loosing (which is the power of the Keys) is attributed to the whole Church, *Mat.* 18. 17, 18. If then the power of the Keyes which is the whole body of Church-power, be given to the body of the Church, though it be not in their power to exercise their pastorall preaching of the word, and administring of the sacraments, yet it is in their power to *elect* such whom God hath furnished with gifts among them unto such offices as may dispense all the holy things of God to them; and by *imposition of hands*, to dedicate them to God, and to the publique service of his Church. Now if the whole Church have this power to impose hands upon their officers, in their first ordination, how can it seem a strange and unheard of thing, or an absurd matter, that *ruling Elders* should together with the *Pastor* and *Teachers*, (all of them making up the *Presbytery* of the Church) impose hands in the name of the Lord, and of the Church upon the ordained?

Answ. 3. Besides. there be that conceive, and that not improbably, that in ancient time, the children baptized in the Church were not received to the Lords Supper, nor into the full fruition of all Church liberties, untill that they being gown up to yeers, did publikely before the Church profesſe their faith, and ratifie the covenant made for them in Baptisme, and so were confirmed (as they

call it) in their Church eſtate, which was not done without *impoſition of hands*, which ſome judicious Divines have conceived to be one cauſe, why *impoſition of hands* is reckoned as one of the ſix *Principles of the foundation of Chriſtian Religion*, Heb. 6. 2. For it could not be a principle of the foundation of Chriſtian faith; it muſt therefore bee a principle of the foundation of Church eſtate and order. Now then, if all the *members* of the Church were anciently confirmed in the full *fruition* of their Church eſtate by *impoſition of hands*, then there were none of the *members* of the Church, but had received *impoſition of hands*, much more the *ruling Elders*, who were over and above the former, ordained to their publique office by *impoſition of hand*; and ſo having received *impoſition of hands* themſelves, they might the more freely impoſe hands upon others.

3. The third Reaſon, which moveth the adverſaries of ruling Elders to conceive that ruling Elders are not intended in this Text of *Timothy*, is, becauſe that many learned and ancient Divines "have debated and ſifted the force of theſe words, and not one of "them ever ſo much as furmiſed any ſuch thing to be contained in "this Text: as *Chryſoſtome, Jerome, Ambroſe, Theophylact*, with others; "yea, all Lay-elderſhip is a ſtranger to all *Antiquity* for 1500. years.

Anſw. Though with thankfulneſſe and reverence we readily acknowledge and accept the Labors of theſe ancient Divines, yet we cannot but conceive it to be much partiality, to ſay they ſifted, or which is all one, diligently ſearched, the force of theſe words in *Timothy*, and that they never ſo much as furmiſed any ſuch thing contained in this Text as *ruling Elders*; for *Chryſoſtome* on "this place putting the queſtion, what it is to *rule well?* An-"ſwereth himſelfe, in two things: firſt, in laying down (as a good "Shepheard) his life for his ſheep: ſecondly, in ſparing none in "his *government*. *Theophylact* reſteth in the former of theſe, *Jerom* "interpreteth *Elders that rule well*, to be Elders who *fulfill their of-*"*fice; Ambroſe* interpreteth them to be good *Diſpenſers, and faithful.* Here is nothing in all theſe expreſſions that argueth any diligent ſifting of the force of the words, or excludeth ſuch *ruling Elders*, as doe attend chiefly to *rule*, not to *teaching*: we looke upon it as a *deceitfull* and *vain-glorious* flouriſh, to beare the world in hand, that *Lay Elderſhip* is a ſtranger to all Antiquitie for 1500. yeares;

deceitfull,

deceitfull, for they know we diſclaime *Lay Elderſhip*, (properly ſo called) as themſelves doe; yea more then themſelves, who doe prefer *Lay Elders* to the higheſt places of Judicature in the Church, next to the Biſhops: For though ſome of the Brethren plead for *Lay Elders*, and bring proofes for them, both from Scripture, and out of Antiquity, yet herein they rather ſpeak after the language of their oppoſites, then according to their owne choyce; for they mean no more then *non-preaching Elders*: And in the places which they quote for them out of Antiquity, wherein *Seniors* are ſometimes diſtinguiſhed from *Presbyters*, ſometimes from *Clerus*; the words *Presbyters* and *Clerus*, are there taken more ſtrictly then their proper and uſuall meaning will beare, to wit, for *Preaching Presbyters*: otherwiſe *Seniors* cannot be diſtinguiſhed from *Presbyters*, in propriety of ſpeech; the one ſignifying the ſame in Latine, which the other doth in Greek: nor can they be diſtinguiſhed from *Clerus*, but by a καλάχρησις. It is alſo a *vain-glorious* flouriſh to avouch *Ruling Elders* ſtrangers to all Antiquity, for 1500. yeares; for, 1. If that were true, yet it will not evince *Ruling Elders* to be no ordinance of God, though ſo long diſcontinued: The keeping the feaſt of Tabernacles in boothes, was neglected of the Church of *Iſrael* many hundred years; to wit, during the greateſt part of the *Aſſyrian Monarchy*, and alſo the whole time of the *Babylonian Monarchy*, yea toward the end of the *Perſian Monarchy*, Neh. 8.17. The long diſuſe of an ordinance of God, doth not make it of none effect; though a contrary cuſtome may be of force to abrogate an humane Law.

2. It was revealed to the Apoſtle *John*, that for the ſpace of 1260 yeares, (which whenſoever they began, took up the greateſt part of theſe 1500.) *Antichriſt* bore ſuchſway in the Church, that *he trod under foot the Court & the holy City* all that while, *Rev.* 11.2,3. And then when *Antichriſt* had all the power in his own hands, no marvell if he took away all power from the *Rulers*, which Chriſt did ordain in his Church, eſpecially ſuch *Rulers*, who whileſt they ſtood, neither his *Rule*, nor the Image of it, could enter or ſtand. For ſet up *Ruling Elders* in every Congregation to tranſact (together with the Preaching Elders) all Church government within the *Congregation*; and what uſe will there be of *preſentments*, of Officers of *Cathedrall* and *Dioceſan* Churches abroad? And for the former part of this 1500

yeers (which is but a ſmall remnant in compariſon) 300. yeers were ſpent in the Primitive perſecutions, whereof wee have few monuments of Antiquity extant, writen in that time; thoſe wee "have ſpeak ſo of *Elders*, as doe indifferently compriſe as well *Ru-* "*ling Elders*, as *Teaching Elders*; *Ignatius* his *Presbyters*, whom "he ſtileth the *Court of God*, the *Combination of the Apoſtles of Chriſt* 'the *holy Aſſembly*, and *Counſellors* and *Aſſeſſors* of the *Biſhops*; with all theſe Epithets may as well agree to *Ruling Elders*, as to *Preachers*: The Scripture doth not diſdain to admit Civill Magiſtrates into the fellowſhip of Gods Tabernacle, *Pſalm.* 82.1. And "why not then the *Rulers* of his Church? For *Tertullian* his *Elders*, "who were *Preſidents over the Cenſures of the Church*, and attained that *honour*, not by bribes, but by *approved Teſtimony*, *Apologetic. Chap.* 29. what is there in his whole deſcription of them, but is compatible to *Ruling Elders*, as well as to *Preaching*? Yea, *Cyprian* (who lived in thoſe ancient bloudy, but zealous times) doth expreſly acknowledge *Elders* that were not *Preachers*: For it evidently appeareth in the 5 Epiſtle of his 4 book, that he ordained *Calinus* and *Ancellus* to be *Presbyters* of his Church, who were no *Preachers* but *readers* onely; and yet were to be maintained *Sportulis communibus*, (that is, at the common charge of the Church) with the *Preſbyters*, and to ſit with himſelf in their grown yeeres. It appeareth alſo in the tenth Epiſtle of his fourth Book, That hee ordained *Numiditus* a Confeſſor, to be a *Presbyter* of his Church, who was not at firſt called to be a Preacher. *Ambroſe*, though he out-lived thoſe times of purer government, yet beareth full witneſſe to the honorable uſe of *Ruling Elders* in the Church before his time; For in his Comment on 1 *Tim.* 15. 1. giveth a reaſon why the Apoſtle would have *Elders* in yeers honoured, even in the healing of their faults, he urgeth the honour of old age in all Nations. Whence, ſaith hee, it was, that the Synagogue, and afterwards the Church had *Elders*, *without whoſe Counſell nothing was done in the Church*: *Which by what negligence is grown out of uſe in the Church, I know not, unleſſe by the ſloath of Teachers, or rather pride, whileſt they onely would ſeem to be ſomewhat.* Againſt this teſtimony, becauſe it is pregnant, ſundry exceptions (or rather evaſions) are taken. As 1. That the Authour of this teſtimony was not that *ancient Ambroſe*, the famous Biſhop of *Millaine*, but ſome other later of that name,

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Anſ. And what though? yet all men acknowledge this other *Ambroſe*, whoſe Teſtimony this is, to be an ancient learned Writer, and therefore his Teſtimony of the Antiquitie of *Ruling Elders*, is ſufficient to ſilence that charge and brave flouriſh, that *Ruling Elders are utterly unknowne, and unheard of from all Antiquitie for* 1500. *yeares.* A ſecond Exception they give, is that *Ambroſe* ſpeaketh not of *Elders* in *Office*, but in *yeares*, without whoſe *Counſell*, not without whoſe *authority* nothing was done in Church.

Anſw. 1. It is evident he ſpeaketh of the *Elders* in the Church, as in the *Synagogue*; now the *Elders* were *Rulers* in the *Synagogues*, as appeareth by ſundry places in the Goſpell. 2. That *nothing was done without their counſell*, implyeth, that *nothing was done without their authority*, as the ſame phraſe of other Ancients imply, when they ſpeake of the concurrence of the Councell of Presbyters in Church-government; for in that ſenſe ſpeaketh *Cyprian* to his Presbyters, (*Epiſtolarum lib.* 3. Epiſt. 10.) *A primordio Epiſcopatus mei*, I determined with my ſelfe, *nihil ſine conſilio veſtro & ſine conſenſu plebis mea privatim ſententia gerere*, and that not out of courteſie, but as the words in the next ſentence implyes, *Sicuti honor mutuus poſcit*. And in the ſame ſenſe *Ieromes* words to the like purpoſe implyes *Authority* in ſuch Councels, whereby the Presbyters of each Church governed their own Church; though otherwiſe in governning other Churches, they imply rather *advice* then *authority*: his words are, *before factions and ſchiſmes grew in the Church*; *Communi Presbyterorum conſilio Eccleſiæ gubernabanter. Hierome* in the 2. Tome of his works, and upon *Titus*. A third exception they give is, that "by *Elders* are meant *preaching Elders*, whom the Biſhops were "wont to conſult withall, in government, but now had left it off, "either by the idleneſſe of the learned Teachers, who for their "owne eaſe gave over meddling with matters pertaining to go-"vernment, or by the pride of the learned Biſhops, who tooke all "upon themſelves, that they alone might ſeeme to be ſomewhat; For if you expound *Paſtorum* for the *Teachers* or *Paſtors* of Pariſhes "only, as the Presbyterians do; or for *Biſhops* alone, as others do; "I cannot ſee (ſaith Dr. *Downham*) how the excluding of *Seniors* "and taking the whole burthen and imployment upon themſelves, "could by *Ambroſe* be imputed as a matter of ſloth and idleneſſe, "either in the *Paſtor* to exclude *lay-Elders*, or in *Biſhops* to exclude

"*learned*

"*learned Presbyters.* *Answ.* 1. The words of *Ambroſe* do plainly imply, not onely that *conſulting with Elders* was grown out of uſe, but that the *Elders* themſelves, who were wont to be conſulted with, were grown out of uſe alſo: for his words be, *the Synagogue, and afterwards the Church had Elders, without whoſe counſell nothing was done in the Church,* &c. which plainly intimateth, the Church formerly had ſuch, but then hath them not, they are obſolete, and accordingly conſulting with them is obſolete alſo. 2. It is plain theſe *Elders* are oppoſite to *Doctors* or *Teachers*, or (if you will ſo conſtrue them) learned men, and therefore theſe *Elders* were neither *Doctors* nor *Teachers*, nor learned men. But to appropriate the name of *Doctors* or *Teachers*, or *learned men* to *Biſhops* only, were too great an arrogancy in *Biſhops*, and too great an injury to the *learned Paſtors* and *Teachers* in every age, till *Antichriſt* his darkneſſe overwhelmed all in ignorance, as well *Biſhops as Paſtors.* 3. It may be marvelled, why thoſe learned oppoſites, that make this exception ſhould underſtand *Ambroſe* to attribute it to the idleneſſe of the Teachers, that for their owne eaſe they gave over meddling in matters appertaining to government, when as rather it was the Biſhops and their parties idleneſſe, that they gave over labouring in Word and Doctrine, and their pride, that they ingroſſed all rule and government into their owne hands; and therefore, when they ſay, they cannot ſee how the excluding of *Seniors*, and the taking of the whole burthen of government upon themſelves, could by *Ambroſe* be imputed as a matter of ſloth and idleneſſe, either in the *Paſtors* or *Biſhops*; ſurely, if men do not willingly ſhut their eyes, they may ſee, and daily experience maketh it palpably evident, that they who are moſt idle in teaching, are moſt buſie and proud in government; ſo that the *Doctorum deſidia, aut magis ſuperbia*, which *Ambroſe* maketh to be the two cauſes why *Seniors* in the Church, and conſulting with them, were then both of them grown out of uſe, need no Comment to expound the ſame, but the perpetuall practice of thoſe perſons, who have from the former ages, to this very day, uſurped all Church-government into their own hands,

If any man ſay (as ſome have done) that whatſoever this *Ambroſe* ſaith, yet that famous Biſhop *Ambroſe* doth utterly diſclaim it, in his Epiſtle to *Valentinian*, that any *Lay-ruler ſhould be Judge of Church-*

Church-offices and cauſes; let him take for an anſwer that which hath been often given; that we utterly deny thoſe *ruling Elders* to be *Lay-men*, or *lay Judges*, but part of that Church body which thoſe ancient times called *Clerus*.

If it be ſaid againe (as alſo it is) that *Ambroſe* calleth his *Preſbyters*, *Antiſtites*, and *Vicars of God*, and ſuch like ſtiles of high honour, let them underſtand, that the leaſt Office of rule in the Church of God, (to a ſpirituall eye) will eaſily and ſafely admit as great acknowledgements as theſe be; onely to fleſh and blood nothing ſeemeth divine and high but ſecular pompe and worldly glory.

Having thus reſcued the Teſtimony of *Ambroſe* unto *Ruling Elders* from all Exceptions (of any colourable weight) made againſt it; Let us adde only one obſervation out of Antiquity, which may give ſome further light to the cauſe in hand. It is well known to all ſuch as are ſtudious of Antiquity, that it was counted a rare and inſolent matter for an *Elder* to preach in the preſence of a *Biſhop*, which was the cauſe why the good old Biſhop *Valerius* was hardly ſpoken of, for ſuffering *Auguſtine*, a *Presbyter* (though a learned *Presbyter*) to preach before him; which is ſaid never any *African* Biſhop had allowed before him. Now whence ſhould ſuch an offence as was taken againſt *Valerius* ariſe, but from tranſlating the ſilence of *Ruling Elders* from Preaching in the preſence of *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, unto thoſe *Presbyters* alſo, who were called oft to Preach the word freely and diligently as wel as the Biſhops themſelves? But when through corruption of times, *Biſhops* claimed to themſelves the principall *paſtorall* cure of Soules, then it was taken for an offenſive matter, that *Teaching Elders* ſhould preach before them; as before it was unwonted for *Ruling Elders* to Preach before the *Teaching* ordinarily.

Obiect. But there remaines one objection or two, which ſome learned and prudent men have made againſt the Office of *Ruling Elders*.

Obiect. 1. It is not credible that the office of *Ruling Elders* ſhould be of Divine or Apoſtolicall Inſtitution, and no footſteps left of it in any Church of Chriſt, for theſe many hundred yeers. Popery it ſelfe, though it corrupted all Ordinances, yet retaineth ſome footſteps of every Ordinance of Chriſt, though much perverted

from the firſt Inſtitution: But there are no footſteps at all of thoſe *Ruling Elders* extant; in any Church, but thoſe of *Genevah*, and ſuch as have followed their patterne. For though ſome tell us of *Church-Wardens* and *Veſtry men* in the *Pariſh Churches of England*, who aſſiſt the Preachers in the governing of the Church, yet there is a great difference between *them* and *Ruling Elders*; For theſe *Church-Wardens* and *Veſtry men*, are appointed not for aſſiſtance to the Miniſters in governing the Church, but for other purpoſes As *Church-Wardens* for keeping the Churches ſtock, and laying it out upon neceſſary repaires of the place of Gods worſhip, (called the Church) and the *Veſtry* being a company of the wiſeſt and richeſt Pariſhioners, that have been, or are to be *Church-Wardens* are exerciſed in auditing the accompts of the *Church-Wardens* and *Collectors for the poore*. And though now and then they are taken up in admoniſhing an unruly neighbour, yet they doe it not by *Authority*, as *Rulers*, but by *Chriſtian diſcretion and Charity*.

Anſw. Wee doe not ſay, that *Church-Wardens* and *Veſtry men*, are the *ſame* with *Ruling Elders*; for though they are both choſe by the body of the Church, yet in the choice; the *qualifications* of *Ruling Elders* are not attended to; nor are they ſo *ordained*, either with the like holy *Solemnitie*, or *inveſted* with the ſame meaſure of *ſpirituall power*, nor allowed to *continue for life*, as *Ruling Elders* are, and ought to be; But yet ſuch as they be, wee may ſee in them ſome footſteps and remnants, (and as it were *Rudera*) of that holy and ancient Ordinance, ſo much as is eſcaped out of the ruines of Antichriſtian Apoſtaſie: For to ſay nothing of *Chancellors*, *Commiſſaries*, and *Officialls*, (who are meere *Lay Elders*, and yet adminiſter Church-Government not in one Church onely, but in many ſcores of Churches,) what other thing ſoundeth the very name of *Church-Wardens*, *Guardiani Eccleſiæ*, but *Church-Guardians*, or *Church Rulers*? And what is the company of *Veſtry men*, but a kinde of a *Conſiſtory*?

Secondly, Though by the Sophiſtry of Satan and of his Vicar (the man of ſin) a great part of this care is transformed from ordering the *ſpirituall body of the Church*, to take care of the body of the *materiall Church* or *Temple*, yet what power of Government is left in any Congregation (beſides Preaching the Word) the

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Church-Wardens and *Veſtry men* doe aſſiſt the *Miniſters* in managing the ſame: they obſerve all ſcandalous diſorders, that are found in any of the Church-Miniſters or people, they admoniſh the offenders: And though they be over-rulers to preſent all diſorders to the *Cathedrall Church* (and the Officers thereof) which of right they ſhould complaine of (when the offenders are incorrigible) onely to their own Congregation, yet it is an uſuall thing for the *Biſhop*, and his Officers, to returne ſuch offenders (having firſt paid them their fees) to the *Miniſter*, and *Church-Wardens*, to make acknowledgement of their offences before them, and to profeſſe their amendment, of which alſo they muſt bring a *Certificate* under the *Miniſter* and *Church Wardens* hands. Yea, (of our knowledge) there be ſome peculiar priviledged Churches in *England*, exempted from the juriſdiction of the *Biſhop*, and his *Officers*, where the *Church-Wardens*, and *Miniſters*, either by themſelves, or with the conſent of the Congregation, doe tranſact all that Government, which in other Churches the *Biſhop* and his *Officers* doe invade and uſurpe; as to admoniſh offenders, to enioyne acknowledgement of ſcandalous offences, and to debarre from the Sacraments, &c. And by this means they repreſſe idleneſſe, drunkenneſſe, ſwearing, Sabbath-breaking, and the like diſorders, with better ſucceſſe then other Townes can doe; who have the help of Major and Juſtices, but not ſo much ſpirituall power in the Church: but by that power which is ſtill left in ſome Churches unto their *Miniſters* and *Guardians*, (or *Rulers*) it may not obſcurely appeare, that anciently they did enjoy it amongſt themſelves, before one Church began to Lord it over another.

Obiect. The other Objection which is made againſt *Ruling Elders*, is; That it is a matter of perrilous conſequence to ſet up *Rulers* in the Church, and that by Authoritie from the Word of God, when yet the word hath no where ſet forth the limits amd bounds of their Authoritie.

Anſw. The Word of God hath clearly enough limited the bounds of a *Ruling Elders* Calling, and the worke of his Rule: For ſince all *Eccleſiaſticall power*, is the power of the *Keyes*; (not of the Sword, *Matth.* 16. 19,) And, *the Kingdome of Chriſt is not of this World*, Ioh. 18. 36. It is plaine, no Church-Governour may take up the *power of the ſword*, to wit, *Civill Iuriſdiction*, without uſurpa-

uſurpation; The power of the ſword is *Princely*, *Lordly*; But the power the *Keys* is only *Stewardly* and *Miniſteriall*; For ſo it is ſaid the *Keys of the Houſe of David to Eliakim* Iſa. 22. 22. And, *he was over the Houſe*, Ver. 15. Which phraſe of *being over the Houſe*, is tranſlated properly, *Gen.* 43. 19. *Steward of the Houſe.* Seeing then the Kingdome of Chriſt is *ſpirituall*, and not *worldly*, and the *Government* of his Kingdom is not *Lordly*, but *Stewardly*, and *Miniſteriall*, evident it is that theſe *Ruling Elders* in the Church may onely attend to workes of *ſpirituall* and *miniſteriall Rule*: And further becauſe ſuch acts of *ſpirituall Rule*, as are diſpenced in the *preaching of the Word*, the *Ruling Elders* are not called to attend unto, but that worke is left unto *Paſtors* and *Teachers*; Therefore plaine it is, that what acts ſoever of *Spirituall Rule* and *Government*, Chriſt hath committed to his Church over and above the *Miniſtery of the Word and Sacraments*: All ſuch acts of *Rule* are committed to the *Ruling Elders*, and none but ſuch.

To Inſtance then in the particular duties of the *Ruling Elders* Office: The *Ruling Elders* having received the keys of Chriſts Houſe, as his *Stewards*; it doth belong to their power.

1. To *open and ſhut the dooꝛes of Chriſts Houſe or Church*; that is, to admit and receive all members and Officers into place in the Church. (with the conſent of the Church) and to keepe out the unworthy: Hence Miniſters are ſaid to be ordained and admitted into office by the laying on the hands of the Presbytery, 1. Tim. 4. 14. And if Miniſters be admitted through their hands into office in the Church, how much more private members after due tryall.

2. If they have power to open the doores of the Church, by admitting officers and other members into the Church, and keeping out the unworthy, (ſhutting the doores againſt them) Then they have alſo power (With the conſent of the Church, and their fellow-*Elders*, as in the former) to *caſt out of the Church by Excommunication* ſuch as fall into ſcandalous offences within the Church, and doe perſiſt therin; For *Ejuſdem poteſtatis eſt deſtituere, cujus eſt inſtituere*, The ſame keys that have power to open the doores, have power to ſhut it.

3. As it is the office of a *Steward* in a family, ſo it is of the *Elders* in the Church, To ſee that none live Inordinately, without a calling,

ling, or idlely in a calling, but every one imployed and ſet a worke to his Lords advantage, 2. *Theſ.* 3. 10. 11. 12.

4. As a *Steward* in the family is not to ſuffer any members in the family to hinder his fellows in his Lords work, ſo neither ought the *Ruling Elder* to ſuffer any to walke ſcandalouſly in the Congregation; for that hindereth edification, which is the worke that each one in his place is to ſet forward in the houſe of God: And the Church-Rulers are to attend to ſee it done accordingly.

5. It is the *Ruling Elders* office to prepare matters for the Congregation, as much as may be, to prevent their trouble, by keeping out ſuch complaints, and other matters as are not yet ripe for the Churches cognizance; And by ordering ſuch things as are to bee preſented to them; *Paul* conſulteth with the *Elders* as well as with the Apoſtles at *Ieruſalem*, before he preſented himſelf to the agitation of the Church, *Act.* 21, 18. to 24.

6. It belongeth to the *Ruling Elders* (as well as to the *Teachers*) to moderate the carriage of all matters in the Congregation Aſſembled, as to call on Strangers of other Churches or members to ſpeak upon occaſion, *Act.* 13. 15. And ſuch may call men forth to ſpeak, may call for ſilence when ſpeech is unſeaſonable.

7. Thoſe *Elders* of *Epheſus*, whom *Paul* ſent for, to wit, both the *Teaching* and *Ruling Elders*, (Acts. 20. 17.) thoſe he commands to feed the flock of God, *ver.* 28. which implieth they ſhould be able, not only to rule, but to inſtruct the people, though not by attending to a word *of Exhortation*, (which is the *Paſtors* office) nor by attending to a word *of Doctrine*, (which is the *Teachers* office) yet by attending to a word *of Admonition*; For the Apoſtle maketh *Admonition* the work of them that are *over the Church in the Lord* 1. Theſ. 5. 12. that is, that Rule over them. The ſame Word which is aſcribed to *Ruling Elders*, (1. Tim. 5. 17.) whom he joyneth with thoſe that labour in Word and doctrine in both places. And indeed Rule without counſell and inſtruction is dumbe. Thus all *Elders* are apt to teach, according to 1. Tim. 3. 5.

8. It is apart of their office (though it be not theirs alone) to viſit the ſick, (eſpecially when they are ſent for) and together with ſome counſell and admonition to pray for them, and to helpe forward their ſpirituall eſtate; as *Iam.* 5. 14. 15. 16.

Wee.

Wee have been the more large in clearing the ſeverall ſorts of theſe *Elders*, which Chriſt hath ordained in his Church, becauſe wee find Satan hath been very buſie to ſet the wits of men awork, both to confound the ſeverall Functions of the *Paſtor* and *Teacher*, and utterly to abandon the office of a *Ruling Elder*.

Now for *Deacons*, which are the other ordinary Officers, ordained by Chriſt for the perpetuall ſervice of the Church: All men doe acknowledge them both to be Inſtituted expreſly in the Scriptures (*Acts* 6. 2. to 6. 1. *Tim.* 3. 8. to 13.) and continued in the Church throughout all ages, though not without ſundry mixtures of corruptions in the practiſe of the Church, which is impertinent to our purpoſe to proſecute, who onely intend to declare and cleare our owne practiſe and proceedings.

Deacons therefore wee reſerve in our Churches, but without diſtinction of pre-eminence of ſome of them above others: much leſſe over the Miniſters and *Elders*: Neither doe wee imploy them about the Miniſtry of the Word, nor about the Government of the Church; For the Apoſtles thought themſelves unmeet, both to attend to the Miniſtry of the Word, and to prayer, and to ſerve Tables alſo; And therefore the worke which the Apoſtles laid downe, and which the *Deacons* were elected and ordained to take up, was the ſerving of Tables, *Acts.* 6. 2. to wit, the ſerving of all thoſe Tables which pertained to the Church to provide for, which are, the Lords Table, the Tables of the Miniſters (or *Elders*) of the Church, and the Tables of the poore brethren, whether of their own body, or ſtrangers; for the maintaining whereof, wee doe not appoint them to goe up and downe to collect the Benevolences of abler Brethren, but as the Apoſtles received the oblations of the Brethren, brought and laid downe at their feete, (*Acts* 4. 35.) and thereby made diſtribution as the χρεια uſe of the Church required; ſo the *Deacons* being ordained to take up and execute that part of the office which the Apoſtles laid downe; they receive the Oblation of the Brethren every Lords day, brought unto them and laid downe before them or elſe brought unto them on the Week day, and diſtribute the ſame, as the uſe and need of the Church doth require.

SECT.

Sect. III.

As for *Widowes*, whom *Paul* ſpeaketh of, as *Servants to the Church* (2 *Tim.*5,9.10.) wee look at them as fit Aſſiſtants to the *Deacons*, in miniſtering to the ſick poore Brethren in ſundry needfull ſervices, which are not ſo fit for men to put their hands unto; onely wee finde it ſomewhat rare to finde a woman of ſo great an age (as the Apoſtle deſcribeth, to wit, of threeſcore years) and withall, to be ſo hearty, and healthy, and ſtrong, as to bee fit to undertake ſuch a ſervice.

Sect. IV.

Having thus declared what are the Officers wee deſire to ſupply each of our Churches withall; wee come now to declare in what manner they are Choſen and Ordained unto their Offices.

When therefore any of the Churches are deſtitute of any of theſe Officers, the Brethren of the Church (according to the Apoſtles advice, in defect of *Deacons*, and ſo in defect of all other Officers) *they looke out from amongſt themſelves*, ſuch perſons as are in ſome meaſure qualified according to the direction of the Word; *Elders* according to 1 *Tim.*2. 8. to 7.*Tit.* 1. 6. to 9. *Deacons* according to *Acts.* 6. 3. 1 *Tim.* 3. 8. to 12. For the Church hath not *abſolute* power to chooſe whom they liſt, but *miniſterial* power onely, to chooſe whom Chriſt hath choſen, hath gifted and fitted for them. If the Church can finde out none ſuch in theire own body, they ſend to any other Church for fit ſupply, and each Church looketh at it as their duty to bee mutually helpfull one to another, in yeelding what ſupply they may, without too much prejudice to themſelves, according to *Cant.* 8. 8, 9, Such being recommended to them for ſuch a work, they take ſome time of tryall of them, partly by their owne obſervation and communion with them, partly by conſultation with the *Elders* of other Churches (continuing there) in ſo great a work; to fulfill the command of the Apoſtle, *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man*, 1 Tim. 3. 22. For every man of good gifts is not alwayes endowed with an honeſt and good heart;

heart; and every good heart is not fitted to cloſe (ſo fully as were meet) with every good people; Every key is not fit to open every lock; nor every good mans gift fit to edifie every people: But when upon tryall, the Church doth finde every mans ſpirit among them deſirous of the fellowſhip of the man, and his gifts; then they agree amongſt themſelves upon a certain day, wherein in a ſolemn manner they intend to Elect him to office amongſt themſelves. Of this they give notice to all the near adjoyning Churches, whom, and when, and to what office they intend to chooſe ſuch a man, whom they nominate to them, intreating their preſence, and brotherly counſell, and aſſiſtance at the day appointed. They give notice alſo thereof unto the Governour, and ſuch other of the Magiſtrates, as are near to them, that the perſon to be choſen meeting with no juſt exception from any, may finde the greater incouragement and acceptance from all.

When the day is come, it is kept as a day of humiliation, with faſting, praying, and preaching the Word, according to the pattern, *Act.* 14.23. & 13.1,2,3.

Towards the end of the day, one of the *Elders* of the Church (if they have any) if not, one of the graver Brethren of the Church, (appointed by themſelves to order the work of the day) ſtandeth "up, and inquireth of the Church, If now after this ſolemn ſeek-"ing of God for his counſell and direction in this weighty work, "they ſtill continue in their purpoſe, to elect ſuch a one for their "own *Paſtor*, or *Teacher*, or *Ruling Elder*, whom before they a-"greed upon; Then having taken their ſilence for a conſent to their purpoſe, He proceedeth to inquire into the approbation of the reſt of the Aſſembly, not only the Meſſengers, and Brethren of other Churches preſent, but of all that ſtand by; becauſe *an Elder is to be a man of good report of them that are without,* (1*Tim.* 3.7.) how much more well approved of the Churches of Chriſt? Hee demandeth "therefore of the Churches firſt, and then of the reſt, whether any "of them have known of any evill, in the man preſented before "them, either in judgement, or practice, which might give them "juſt cauſe to forbear his election?

If all keepe ſilence (as uſually they doe, for if any have any juſt exception againſt the man, he is wont to acquaint ſome or other of the Church with it before the day) he turneth himſelfe to the

the Church again. Now ſeeing all is clear for their free election of him to ſuch an office, he deſireth all the Brethren of that Church, to declare their Election of him with one accord, by lifting up their hands; which being done, he deſireth to know of the partie choſen, whether he doth accept of that calling, which the Church hath given him in the name of Chriſt unto that office? He having expreſſed his acceptance (upon ſuch grounds, as wherein he hath chiefly ſeen the hand of God leading him thereunto,) the *Elder* doth then admoniſh the Church what duties the Lord requireth of them all in his Word towards him, whom they have thus choſen; And afterwards advertiſeth him what duties the Lord requireth of him in that place towards the Church; And having taken the acknowledgements of them both, of their mutuall dutie towards one another; He then with the *Presbyterie* of that Church (if they have any, if not, two or three others of the graveſt Chriſtians amongſt the Brethren of that Church, being deputed by the "bodie) doe in the name of the Lord Ieſus ordaine him unto "that Office, with impoſition of hands, calling upon the Lord, "(who hath furniſhed him with ſpirituall gifts, and bowed the "hearts of the Church to call him to that office) to accept and "owne him therein, to enlarge his heart and ſpirit, according to "all the duties thereof, to breath in all his adminiſtrations, and "to guide and bleſſe all his going out and coming in before them: And ſo turning his ſpeech upon the perſon on whom their hands "are impoſed, He as the mouth of the *Presbyterie*, expreſſeth their "ordination of him to that office in the name of the Lord Ieſus, "and puts a ſolemne charge upon him to looke well to himſelfe, "and to the whole flock over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made "him an overſeer, as one that muſt give account of all their ſoules "unto the great Shepheard of the ſheep, at the day of his appear-"ing. After this the *Elders* of their Churches preſent, obſerving the preſence of God, both in the duties of that day performed by the Officer then choſen, and ordained, and in the orderly proceeding of the Church to his *Election* and *Ordination*, one of them in the name of all the reſt, doth give unto him the *right hand of fellowship*, in the ſight of all the Aſſembly, teſtifying their Brotherly acceptance of him, and their thankfulneſſe to God for his gracious gift beſtowed on him, and doth

exhort him in the Lord to fulfill the miniſtery which he hath received of the Lord.

And, ſo after publike praiſe given to God by him in the name of the Church, he diſſolveth the Aſſembly with a Bleſſing.

Sect. V.

FOr our calling of Deacons, we hold it not neceſſary to ordaine them with like ſolemnity, of faſting and prayers, as is uſed in the Ordination of Elders: becauſe we do not reade the Apoſtles gave any preſident thereof in the Ordination of the firſt *Deacons* at *Ieruſalem*, Act. 6. But the Brethren of the Church having looked out among themſelves men fitly qualified for that calling, according to the Scriptures formerly mentioned, and having made ſome proofs of them according to the Rule (1 *Tim.* 3. 10.) the Elders with the conſent of the Church upon ſome Lords day, or other publike holy meeting, do ordain them to the Office, and appoint them over that buſineſſe, with prayer and impoſition of hands.

Sect. VI.

Object. TWo things are here demanded; Firſt, by what warrant the People chooſe their Officers?

Anſw. From the Preſident of the Apoſtolical Churches. In the chooſing of an Apoſtle, the voices of people went as far as any humane Suffrages could go; of an hundred and twenty, they choſe two, and preſented them before the Lord, and his Apoſtles. And becauſe an Apoſtle was immediately to be called of God, out of thoſe two God choſe one, *Act.* 1. 15. 23. 26. *Act.* 14. 23. The Apoſtles are ſaid to have *ordained Elders by lifting up of hands*, (to wit, of the people) as the original word implieth: And the multitude of the Diſciples are directed by the Apoſtles to look out and chooſe ſeven *Deacons*, Act. 6. 3. 15.

The practice of ſucceeding Churches for many years after, is plain from *Cyprians* words, *Lib.* 1. *Epiſt.* 4. *Plebs maximè poteſtatem habet vel dignos Sacerdotes eligendi, vel indignos recuſandi.*

Object. 2. It is alſo demanded, by what warrant doth a particular Church depute ſuch who are not *Presbyters*, to *lay their hands upon*

upon Presbyters? Were it not more regular and orderly to repaire to ſome Biſhop, to receive *impoſition of hands* from him? or as the *Preſbyters* in every Church in *Crete*, received *impoſition of hands* from *Titus*, who was left in *Crete* with Epiſcopall Authoritie for that very end, *Tit.* 1. 5? or rather then take *impoſition of hands from lay-men*, (as they are called) why doe not the Churches rather intreat the *Elders* of other Churches to ſupply the defect of their own Presbyterie, by the Presbyters of other Churches?

Anſ. The warrant by which each particular Church doth depute ſome of their owne body (though not Presbyters) to lay their hands upon thoſe whom they have choſen to be their Presbyters, is grounded upon the power of the keys, which the Lord Ieſus Chriſt) who received all fullneſſe of power from the Father) hath given to the Church: For the power of the keys, is the power of opening and ſhutting, binding and looſing, *Matth.* 16. 19. And this is given to the whole Church met together in his name, *Mat.* 18. 18. *Whatſoever* (ſaith Chriſt, ſpeaking of the Church) *yee ſhall binde on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven, and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven*: which is the whole miniſteriall power of the keys.

Sect. VII.

Object. 1. THe Church is not the firſt ſubject and receptacle of all Eccleſiaſticall power; For though the Church elect a Paſtor or other Elder, yet the Office of a Paſtor is from Chriſt, *Eph.* 4. 8. And ſo is his Authoritie from Chriſt alſo; And if hee have neither his Office, nor his Authoritie from the Church, how can hee bee ordained by the impoſition of the hands of the Church?

Anſw. 1. Though the office of a Paſtor in generall be immediately from Chriſt, and the authoritie from him alſo, yet the application of this office, and of this authoritie to this elect perſon, is by the Church; and therefore the Church hath ſufficient and juſt warrant, as to elect and call a Presbyter unto office, ſo to ordaine him to it, by impoſition of hands: They that have power to elect a King, have power alſo to depute ſome in their name to ſet the Crown upon his head.

Anſw. 2. As the Authoritie of the *Paſtor*, and other *Elders*, is not from the Church, but from Chriſt; ſo neither is their Office and Authoritie from the Biſhop, nor from the *Presbyterie*, nor from the *Claſsis of Presbiteries*; If therefore that were a juſt impediment, why the Church ſhould not lay hands upon their elect *Paſtors* or *Elders*, becauſe neither their office, nor their Authoritie, is from the Church, then neither may the *Bishop*, nor the *Presbiterie*, nor the *Claſsis* lay their hands upon them; becauſe their office and Authoritie is no more (nor ſo much) from them, as from the Church; nor by this Argument might the *Apoſtles* themſelves (if they were preſent, ordaine Officers, becauſe neither the *office* nor the *Authoritie* is from the Apoſtle, but from *Chriſt* onely. Neither will it follow from hence (as ſome object) that if the *Elders* received their *ordination from the Church*, then they ſhould execute their office in the *Churches name*, or that then they may be more or leſſe diligent in their office at the *Churches appointment*, or that then the *Church* hath a *Lord-like power over them*, or that then the *Elders* muſt receive their *errand from the Church*, as an Ambaſſador doth from him from whom he receiveth his Commiſsion; or that then the Church, in defect of all Officers, may performe *all duties of their Officers*, (as to adminiſter Sacraments, and the like.)

None of all theſe things will follow; For 1. Moſt of theſe Objections do ſtrike as much againſt *impoſition of hands* by *Bishops* or *Presbiters*. 2. Though the Elders do receive the application of their office and of their power by the Church, yet not from the Church; or if from the Church, miniſterially onely, as inſtruments unto Chriſt. So that they cannot chooſe or ordaine whom they pleaſe, to what office they pleaſe, but whom they ſee the Lord Ieſus hath prepared and fitted for them, and as it were, choſen and ordained to their hands: nor may they inlarge or ſtraiten the limits of his office whom they do elect or ordaine, but as the Lord hath preſcribed: nor can they give him any errand, but onely a *Charge to looke to the miniſterie which hee hath received from the Lord*: nor have they any more Lordly power over him, then he over them, but both miniſteriall, as they have received from the Lord: neither may they adminiſter Sacraments, in defect of all Officers, becauſe that by appointment from Chriſt pertaineth onely to ſuch as are called by office to preach the Goſpel, *Mat.*28.19.20. As for

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mutuall inſtruction and *and admiſsion*, election and ordination of Officers, opening the doores of the Church by admiſſion of members, and ſhutting the ſame by Church-cenſures; theſe things they may doe (if need be) without Officers; yea, and if all their Officers were found culpable, either in Hereticall Doctrine, or ſcandalous crime, yet the Church hath lawfull Authoritie to proceed to the cenſure of them all: For they that as a Church might admoniſh *Archippus*, (*Col.* 4. 17.) might (in caſe he had not hearkened to their admonition) have proceeded againſt him to Excommunication; And they that might ſo proceed againſt one of their Officers, might in like ſort (upon like ground) proceed againſt them all, which they could not doe, if the Church did receive the power of the keys not immediately from Chriſt, but from the *Presbyters*: And yet in ſuch caſes our Churches are never wont to proceed, but in the preſence, and with the conſent and approbation of other Churches; as knowing that in ſuch weightie caſes *in the multitude of Counſellors there is ſafetie*: And as the Church doth not chooſe any Elders, but in the preſence, and with the approbation of other Churches; ſo neither doth it proceed to the cenſure of them, but with the like grave and ſolemne aſſiſtance.

Object. 2. The Apoſtles received the power of the keys *immediately* from Chriſt, *Ioh.* 20. 23. And therefore the Church received it from the Apoſtles, and the Officers of the Churches from them alſo, and not from the Church.

Anſw. It is true, the Apoſtles being extraordinary Officers, as they were *immediately* called and choſen of Chriſt, not by the Church; ſo they were moſt of them ordained by Chriſt, and not by the Church; And yet not all of them neither: For *Paul* and *Barnabas*, though *choſen* to the Apoſtolical office immediately from God, yet they were ordained to that office by the *impoſition of hands* of ſome officers, or members of the Church, *Act.* 13. 2, 3. But that hindereth not, but as the *Apoſtles* received their power immediately from Chriſt, ſo did the Church receive their power immediately from Chriſt alſo; For he that ſaid to the Apoſtles, *Whoſe ſinnes yee retain, they are retained; whoſe ſinnes ye remit they are remitted*; (Ioh. 20. 23.) He alſo ſaid to the Church, *Whatſoever ye binde on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven, and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven*, Mat. 18. 18. which is a Commiſsion of the ſame power, and to the ſame effect.

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If then the Church have received, as well as the Apoſtles, the ſame Commiſſion of Church-power, (ſo farre as it is of perpetuall uſe) that though the Church then preſented their Officers choſen by them to receive Ordination from the Apoſtles, yet when the Apoſtles are ceaſed, and no other ſucceſſors left in their roome, from whom their Officers might receive ordination, but from the Preſbyterie of their own Church, then where ſuch a Presbyterie is yet wanting, and their power is now to be executed, the Church hath full power to give ordination to them themſelves, by the impoſition of their hands.

Sect. VIII.

Object. WHen the Apoſtles ceaſed, Biſhops were left as ſucceſſors in their roome; As *Timothy* in *Epheſus*, and *Titus* in *Crete*, to *ordaine Elders in every Church*, Tit. 1.5.

Anſw. *Timothy* and *Titus* were not left to ordaine Elders as Biſhops, but as Evangeliſts, whoſe office was alike extraordinarie in the Church, as that of Apoſtles and Prophets, (Eph. 4.11.) Their work being to follow the Apoſtles, and ſo ſet forward the work which the Apoſtles had begun, whereto the Apoſtles called them forth, and directed them; And not to keepe ſetled reſidence in any one Church, as Elders doe, or in any one Nation of Churches, as Biſhops doe: *Timothy* is expreſly commanded to do the *work of an Evangeliſt*, 2 Tim. 4.5. And *Titus* was not ordained a Biſhop at *Crete*, but left in *Crete*, as having travelled up and downe with *Paul*, *Gal.* 2.3. and comming to *Crete*, was left to direct the certain beleevers in their Church-affaires, after *Pauls* departure: afterwards he departed to *Dalmatia*, 2 Tim. 4.10. Sometimes *Paul* appointed him to meet him at *Nicopolis*, Tit. 3.12. Sometimes he ſent him to *Corinth*, 2 Cor. 12. 18. And commends him (as his partner and fellow-helper) to the Church of *Corinth*: And at *Troas*, *Paul* found no reſt in his ſpirit, becauſe he found not *Titus* his Brother, 2 *Cor.* 2.13. And in *Macedonia* he found much comfort, becauſe he found *Titus* there, 2 *Cor.* 7. 5, 6. Which argueth his calling was not Epiſcopall to reſt in a certaine charge, but to travell up and down with the Apoſtles, or after them, or whither the Holy Ghoſt ſhould lead them forth to help forward the work of Chriſt, and the Apoſtles.

Object.

Object. But in the Subſcriptions of the Epiſtles of *Paul* to them, *Titus* is called the *firſt ordained Biſhop of all the Cretians*: And *Timothy* the *firſt ordained Biſhop of the Church of Epheſus.*

Anſw. The Subſcriptions of *Pauls* Epiſtles, both thoſe and the reſt are no part of Canonical Scripture, but Apocrypha, not written by the Apoſtles themſelves, but by ſome Scribe that copied them out in after ages, as is obſerved by many learned both Proteſtants and Papiſts: In particular this Subſcription in the Epiſtle to *Titus*, containeth an apparent miſtake; for the Subſcription ſaith, *the Epiſtle was written from Nicopolis to Macedonia*: as if *Paul* had been at Nicopolis when he wrote this Epiſtle: which conceit in the Scribe ſprang from a miſtake of *Pauls* words, *Tit.* 3. 12. where *Paul* bids *Titus* be *diligent to come to me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter*: but *Paul* doth not ſay, I have determined *here* to winter, (as if he were there already in Nicopolis) but I have determined *there* to winter, to wit, as intending to go thither for to winter. The Subſcription of the Epiſtle to *Timothy*, ſtiling him the *firſt ordained Biſhop of the Epheſians*, will not ſtand with the Apoſtles charge to him in the ſame Epiſtle, (2 *Tim.* 4. 5.) *do the work of an Evangeliſt.* For a Biſhop was to attend with perſonal reſidence upon his charge, *Act.* 20. 22. But an *Evangeliſt* was to travell up and down with the Apoſtles, or after them; to come and go at their appointment: As *Paul* there doth command *Timothy to be diligent to come to him*, 2 Tim. 4. 9. 21. Againe when *Paul* addreſſeth himſelfe to go to Rome, (from whence this Subſcription telleth us this Epiſtle was written) he intending to paſſe by Macedonia to Rome, (*Act.* 19. 21. *beſought Timothy to abide ſtill at Epheſus*, 1 Tim. 1. 3. But if *Timothy* had been the Biſhop, ordained of the Epheſians, his dutie would have bound him to abide there, and ſhould not have needed *Pauls* intreaty ſo to do.

Beſides when *Paul* in that journey came to Miletus, he called for the Elders of Epheſus, Act. 20. 17. whom alſo he named Biſhops: for ſo the Greek word is, which is tranſlated Overſeers, v. 28. and then *Paul* acknowledged no ſuch ſingular ordination of any to a tranſcendent Epiſcopacie, but was common to all the Elders of Epheſus: But that it may further appear, that it was not the intent of *Paul*, or of the other Apoſtles, to direct the Churches to ſend the Elders whom they have choſen, unto any Tranſcendent

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(or *Dioceſan*) *Biſhop* for *ordination*, nor left any to like eminent place after *Timothy* and *Titus* to performe that work; Let it be conſidered, that there is no direction at all in the Epiſtles of *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, for the Churches election of any *Evangeliſt*, or of any *Biſhop* over many Churches.

For 1. The *Biſhops Paul* ſpeaketh of in *Timothy*, of whoſe qualification he giveth direction 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. to 7. he calleth them all (when he commeth to give order for their maintenance) by the name of *Elders*; ſome *Ruling Elders*; ſome *Labouring in the Word and Doctrine*: And in his Epiſtle to *Titus*, the *Elders* which *Paul* left *Titus* to ordaine in every Citie, he calleth them *Biſhops*, Tit. 1. 5. 7. Now of theſe he appointeth *many Elders*, and *many Biſhops* in one Citie or Church: not many Cities or Churches under one Biſhop, Act. 14. 23. *Elders in every Citie*, Act, 20. 17, 18. *Many Elders* and *Biſhops* in the Church of *Epheſus*, Phil. 1. 11. *Many Biſhops* as well as many *Deacons*, in one Church of *Philippi*, and that a poor one too: for *Philippi* was a Church in *Macedonia*, Act. 16. 12. And all the *Churches of Macedonia had tryal of deep poverty*, 2 Cor. 8. 1, 2.

2. In the Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, there is no difference at all put, of any one Biſhop above his fellows, except onely the difference of *Ruling* and *Teaching Elders*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. And thoſe as they are not ſet over many Churches, ſo neither are any of them ſet above his fellows: onely the Preachers are allowed more reverence and maintenance then the Rulers. If the Holy Ghoſt had appointed ſome ſingular Biſhops above the reſt, of any tranſcendent and eminent office, he would have appointed him alſo ſome eminent and tranſcendent proper work of his office: But what ſhall that be? ſhall it be Ordination, as *Hierome* ſaith, (ſpeaking of the Biſhops in his time: *Quid facit Epiſcopus excepta ordinatione quod Presbyter non facit?*) Why, that is a worke of Rule: or ſhall it be hearing accuſations againſt Elders, and cenſuring them accordingly: as 1 *Tim.* 5. 19. 20? Why, that is a work of Rule alſo. Now the Apoſtle acknowledgeth no Acts of Rule, nor any Elders (or Biſhops) that do Rule, as worthy of greater honour, then ſuch Elders as labour in word and Doctrine, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. It is therefore apparently contradictory to the inſtitutions given by *Paul* in the Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, to ſet up any eminent or tranſcendent Biſhop in the Church, in reſpect

respect of Rule, or exercise of office of more honour and power, then pertaineth to all the Ministers of the Word. So that evident it is, that neither Ordination, nor Iurisdiction, (which are both of them Acts of Rule) are to be fetched from transcendent Bishops, but pertain indifferently to all the Presbyters.

Sect. IX.

Object. BVt if no transcendent acts of jurisdiction and rule be reserved unto one Bishop alone above other Ministers, how cometh it then to passe, that in *Rev.* 2. 3. each singular Angel in the Churches of Asia, is admonished, and reproved alone for all the faults that are found in his Church, whereof he is the Angel? Why should one Angel alone be charged with the guilt of all those faults in the Church, if it were not in his hand alone to redresse and punish them?

Answ. It is an usuall thing with *Iohn*, (and found also in other Scriptures) to use the name of Angel not singularly for one person, but collectively for a company, administring the same work: As the seven Angels that sounded the seven Trumpets, & the seven Angels that powred out the seven Vialls, were not seven singular persons, but seven companies, or sorts of persons, performing that service. And when *David* saith, *the Angel of the Lord pitcheth his tent about them which fear him*, Psal. 34.7. He speaketh not of one Angel alone, but of many of them; For one alone cannot pitch his Tents about all them that fear God. And that *Iohn* in the second and third Chapters of the *Revelation*, did not mean by the Angel of the Church, one singular person, but the whole company of the Ministers of the Church (the whole Presbyterie of persons, more then one) it is evident by his speech unto them, as unto many; the devil (saith he) shall cast some of you into Prison, *Rev.* 2. 10. Some of you, which implies more then one. And again in *Rev.* 2. 24. speaking unto the Angel of the Church of Thiatira, but unto *you* *, I say, and unto the rest of Thiatira, which argueth that the Angel distinguished from the rest of the Church, was more then one person; for he saith unto *you*, in the plural number.

Gr. ὑμῖν

* Gr. ὑμῶν *you in the plurall*

Object. But now, say some; Let it be so then, if such eminent and transcendent Bishops (that is, *Diocesan Bishops*) who claime a

peereleſſe power in Ordination and Iuriſdiction to themſelves alone, have no foot-hold in the Scripture, then let them neither have name, nor place, portion, right, nor memoriall in the Chriſtian Churches of the new Teſtament. But yet nevertheleſſe, the Apoſtle is clear for a *Presbytery*, and acknowledgeth impoſition of hands (even upon *Timothy*, how much more upon other Elders) by the Presbyterie, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14.

Anſw. Wee willingly alſo acknowledge the ſame, where God hath furniſhed any Church with a Presbyterie. To them it pertaineth to ordain by impoſition of hands, any Elders or Deacons that ſhall bee choſen by office, by the Church committed to them; But if the Church want a Presbyterie; for want of Elders, they want a warrant to repair the Presbyterie of another Church, to impoſe hands upon their elect Elders.

Our Reaſons be;

Reaſ. 1. Firſt, Ordination by impoſition of hands, is a work of Church Power, as all men acknowledge: Now as no Church hath Power over another, but all of them ſtand in Brotherly equalitie one towards another; ſo the Presbyterie of one Church, hath no Power over the Elders of another. As the Apoſtles having all of them received the ſame Commiſſion (*Ioh.* 20. 23.) had none of them power over another; ſo the Churches having recived all of them the ſame power of the keys, (as hath been ſhewed above) they none of them have power over another, and therefore no power of ordination of one anothers Officers.

As every Church hath equally received the ſame power of the keys, ſo ought they to maintain and ſtand faſt in the ſame; The power of the keys as it is a priviledge and liberty purchaſed to the

Reaſ. 2. Church by the bloud of the Lord Ieſus; ſo at a leſſe rate it may not be alienated from the Church. Chriſt by his death and reſurrection hath obtained all power both in heaven and in earth, *Mat.* 28. 18. *Phil.* 2. 8, 9, 10. And look where he hath communicated the ſame by his Teſtament, ratified in his bloud, there it ought to remaine and not to be removed out of their hands, by the hand of man or Angel. Whence it appeareth unlawfull for any Church of Chriſt to put over that power which they have received of Chriſt, out of their own hands, into the hands of the Presbyters of other Churches. The Apoſtles having received all of them equall power from Chriſt,

Chriſt, it was not lawfull for them by common conſent, to have conferred upon *Peter* and *Paul*, *Iames* and *Iohn*, a tranſcendent government over them all. If ſome of the Apoſtles ſeem to be pillars, as is ſaid of *Peter*, *Iames* and *Iohn*, Gal. 2.9. and ſo more eminent in gifts then all their brethren, it may put upon their brethren an expediencie, and ſometimes a neceſſity to call upon them for more counſel, but not to call them to more authority. In like ſort, if a Church in a City, and the Officers thereof, be of more eminent gifts and graces, then a Church in a village, it is a juſt occaſion for the Church in the village to liſten the more after the counſel of the Church in the Citie, but not to ſubmit the more unto their Authority in the way of ſubjection. And ſo it is true, a Claſſis of the Presbyters of many Churches may excel (in more variety of all abilities) then the Presbyterie of any one Church, yet that onely reacheth to make their counſel the more weighty and acceptable, but not to inveſt them with more rule or more authority. Thirdly, if a Church ſhall ſend to the Presbyters of another Church for *ordination of their Elders*, they may as well repaire and ſubmit to them for *cenſuring of their offenders*; and would not that be a manifeſt tranſgreſſion of the royall law of Church-Government, *Matth.* 18.15. 16, 17, 18. If a Brother ſee his brother falne into a ſcandall, and after dealing with him firſt himſelf alone, and then with the conviction of two or three witneſſes, find him to give no ſatisfaction at all, whither ſhall the offended brother repair? If to the Church whereof the brother offending is a member, that is indeed according to the rule, but what need is there then, or what ground of repairing to the Presbyters of other Churches? by what Authority ſhall they proceed to cenſure the offender that is a member of another Church?

Indeed if a Brother offended ſhall complain to the Church whereof the offending brother is a member, and the Church neglect to do their duty, through prejudice or partiality, or other remiſneſſe, it may then be lawful to make uſe of the brotherly love and brotherly communion, which one Church oweth and beareth to another. The brother offended, and not ſatisfied with the proceedings of his owne Church againſt the offence, may then repair to the *Elders* of other Churches, and crave their judgement and counſel in the caſe in hand; and if they doe not approve upon

good inquirie the proceedings of their ſiſter-Church, they may admoniſh the *Elders* of that Church touching what they judge amiſſe. But if the Elders hearken not unto them, the Elders who admoniſh them, being unſatisfied, may acquaint their own Church with the offence of their neighbour Church, and then in the name of the Lord, and of their own Church, they may admoniſh them thereof, by Letters and Meſſengers ſent to them to that purpoſe. If yet the Church admoniſhed, hearken not unto them, the Church offended may and ought to acquaint their neighbour Churches therewithall, who may joyne with them, either in *convincing* the offending Church of their ſin; and ſo prevaile with them unto reformation, or elſe (if they perſiſt in obſtinacy) they may from thenceforth withdraw all continuance of brotherly communion with them, till they acknowledge their tranſgreſſion; which is as far as Churches may goe in a Church-way, in caſe of obſtinacie of a neighbour-Church in any offence, and ſo farre they may goe according to the proportion of the rule, *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17. Looke what rule a brother is to attend unto in ſeeking to heal the *offence of a brother*, the ſame rule may and ought a ſiſter-Church to attend unto, in ſeeking to heale an offended ſiſter-Church. And looke as *Paul* who had received the ſame equall power of the keys, with *Peter, reproved Peter openly when he was to bee blamed*, Gal. 2. 11. ſo *one Church*, who hath received the ſame equall power of the keys with another, may reprove another Church openly when they are to be blamed. And look by what power they may reprove them, by the ſame they may proceed to withdraw from them, if they hearken not to their reproof according to God. But all this notwithſtanding, they will not allow a brother offended to complaine to the Presbyters of another Church, till he ſee no hope of removall of the offence by his own Church at home.

Chap. III.

Of the Addition of Members to the Church.

Sect. I.

THe Church being thus gathered and furniſhed with ſuch Officers, in ſuch manner as the Lord hath appointed; looke as in the firſt Primitive Church *the Lord added to them*

them dayly ſuch as ſhould bee ſaved, Acts 2.47. ſo doe wee admit and receive from the Lord ſuch as he ſendeth and addeth unto us. The firſt and loweſt number of a Church, to which the other members are added, is not expreſly limited in the Word, onely it is not ſo low as ſome have conceived, to conſiſt onely of two or three, it is a miſtake of that place, *Mat.* 18.20. where a promiſe of Chriſts preſence is made to two or three, to conceive it made to the loweſt number of a Church-body; for thoſe two or three, are not conſidered there as a Church-body, but as a ſufficient number of witneſſes to joyn with a brother offended, in convincing and admoniſhing the brother that gave the offence; againſt whom, if he do not hearken to them, they are then further to proceed, and to tell the Church. Which argueth that they themſelves are not a Church, but a ſmaller companie agreeing in a dutie of brotherly love, either to heale an offending brother by their own admonition, or to witneſſe againſt him before the Church; and yet they have a ſpeciall promiſe of Chriſts preſence with them in the dutie, leſt they might thinke ſuch a labour of love undertaken in vaine.

But the Church muſt needs bee a greater number then two or three, ſeeing theſe two or three are to refer the perſon and the cauſe to a greater body then themſelves; for though there might be a domeſticall Church in *Adam* and *Eve* at the beginning, yet ſuch a Church which Chriſt hath inſtituted in the new Teſtament, conſiſteth of a greater number. The very officers of a Church, compleatly furniſhed, are no leſſe then foure, (a Paſtor, a Teacher, an Elder, a Deacon,) and therefore the body of the Church had neede to bee of a greater number then ſo. And though the eſſence of a Church may conſiſt without the integritie of all his members (as a lame man that wanteth ſome of his members may have the eſſence of a man) yet under ſeven, a Church can hardly conſiſt of ſo many members as doe performe any part of a Church-body.

To ſuch a body, how many members may be added, is not limited expreſly in the Word, onely it is provided in the Word, that they be no more then that all may meet *in one Congregation*, that all may *heare, and all may be edified*. For (as hath been noted above) the Apoſtle ſo deſcribeth the whole *Church as meeting in one place*, 1 Cor. 14.23. But if *all* cannot *heare*, *all* cannot be *edified*. Beſides the Apoſtle requireth, that when the Church meeteth together for the

the celebrating of the Lords Supper, *they ſhall tarry one for another*, 1 Cor. 11. 33. Which argueth the Church indued with only ordinary Officers, ſhould conſiſt of no greater number then that all might partake together of the Lords Supper in one Congregation, and therefore ſuch Pariſhes as conſiſt of 15000. though they were all fit materialls for Church-fellowſhip yet ought to be divided into many Churches, as too large for one. When the hive is to full, Bees ſwarme into a new hive; ſo ſhould ſuch exceſſive numbers of Chriſtians iſſue forth into more Churches. Whence it appeareth to be an error, to ſay there is no limitiaton or diſtinction of Pariſhes, meaning of Churches, (jure divion) for though a preciſe quotient, a number of hundreds and thouſands be not limited to every Church, yet ſuch a number is limited as falleth not below ſeven, nor riſeth above the bulke of one Congregation, and ſuch a Congregation wherein all may meet, and all may hear, and all may partake, and all may be edified together.

Sect. II.

They that deſire to bee added and joyned to ſuch a body, they firſt make known their deſires to the *Elders* of the Church, who take triall of their knowledge in the principles of religion, and of their experience in the ways of grace, and of their godly converſation amongſt men; that if any of them be found ignorant, and graceles, or ſcandalous, he may not be preſently preſented to the Church, till theſe evils were removed. The ſtones that were to be laid in *Solomons* Temple, were ſquared and made ready before they were laid in the building; neither iron, nor ax, nor any iron tool was heard in the houſe, while it was a building, 1 *King* 6. 7. And wherefore ſo, if not to hold forth that no members were to be received into the Church of Chriſt, but ſuch as were rough-hewen, and ſquared, and fitted to lie cloſe and levell to Chriſt and to his members?

But when ſuch as offer themſelves are approved of the Elders, they are propounded by one of the Ruling Elders to the Church, with a motion to the brethren to make enquirie after them, and if they ſhall heare of any juſt exceptions againſt them, to give notice of it to one of the Elders.

But if no exception be heard of, they are called forth before the Church,

Church, after other holy duties are performed, and each one maketh confeſſion of his ſinnes, and profeſſion of his faith. In confeſſion of his ſinnes (that it may appeare to be a penitent confeſſion) he declareth alſo the grace of God to his ſoule, drawing him out of his ſinful eſtate into fellowſhip with Chriſt. In the profeſſion of his faith, he declareth not onely his good knowledge of the principles of Religion, but alſo his profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, with his deſire of walking therein, with the fellowſhip of that Church. Now before or after ſuch his profeſſion or confeſſion, thoſe of the brethren of the Church who are of his acquaintance doe give ſome good teſtimony (if need be) of his life and converſation; either according to their owne knowledge of him, or according to the credible reports or letters which they have received concerning him: which done, the Ruling Elder, or one of the Preaching Elders propoundeth it to the Church, whether from all that they have heard and ſeene, they finde any juſt exception againſt him? if ſo, it is cleared and removed before any further proceedings; if no juſt exception appear, the Ruling Elder then moveth the Church to expreſſe their acceptance of him into fellowſhip with them, by lifting up their hands. Which done (and the like courſe taken with two or three more, as the time will permit (the Elder propoundeth to them *the heads of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with his Church, what promiſes of grace he hath made to them; as alſo what duties of faith and obedience he doth require of them; As to take the Lord Ieſus for their onely Prieſt and Atonement, their onely Prophet and guide, their only King and Law-giver, and to walke in profeſſed ſubjection unto all his holy Ordinances; as alſo to walk in brotherly love with the brethren of this Church, unto mutuall edfication and ſuccour, according to the rule of the Goſpel.* And the new received members acknowledging this to be their dutie, and profeſſing their conſent unto it in the name of Chriſt; the Elder doth further acquaint them with what duties of holy watchfullneſſe over them they may expect from the Church, and ſo ſhutteth up his work with ſome ſhort prayer unto the Lord, who keepeth covenant and mercy with thouſands of his people, to make us all faithfull to him, and one to another, according to the rules of his holy Goſpel in Chriſt Ieſus, the Mediator, and ſuretie of his Covenant, between the Lord and his people.

SECT.

Sect. III.

NOw what offence is there in all this? or what ſcruple may ariſe in a godly mind againſt theſe things? Two or three things ſeem herein offenſive, but are not.

Firſt, That we require gracious qualifications in ſuch as wee receive to Church-fellowſhip: whereas the viſible Church is ſaid to conſiſt of all ſorts, good and bad, and to be a garner containing chaffe and wheat, as a field wherein wheate and tares grow up together.

Secondly, That we receive ſuch into the Church by a covenant.

Thirdly, That we communicate too much power unto the people, and do not rather referre all power (in this caſe) into the hands of the *Elders*. To give therefore ſome accounnt of theſe, as the Lord ſhall aſſiſt.

For the firſt, Though we willingly admit all commers to the hearing of the Word with us (as the Corinthians admitted Infidels, 1 *Cor.* 14.24,25.) yet we receive none as members into the Church but ſuch (as according to the judgement of charitable Chriſtians) may be conceived to be received of God into fellowſhip with Chriſt the head of the Church.

Our Reaſons be;

Firſt, from the neer relation between Chriſt Ieſus and the Church: as alſo between the Church and the other perſons in the Trinity: the Lord Ieſus is the head of the Church, even of the viſible Church; and the viſible Church is the body of Chriſt Ieſus, 1 *Cor.* 12.27. The viſible Church is ſaid to be the habitation of God by the Spirit, *Eph.* 2.22. to be the Temple of the holy Ghoſt, and the Spirit of God to dwell in them, 1 Cor. 3.16,17. to be eſpouſed to Chriſt as a chaſte Virgin, 2 Cor. 11.2. The members of the viſible Church are ſaid to be the ſons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, 2 Cor. 6.18, and are exhorted to be followers of him as dear children, Eph. 4.1. Now how can the viſible Church be the members of the body, or the Spouſe of Chriſt, or the Temple of the holy Ghoſt, or the Sons and Daughters of the heavenly Father, except the members in charitable diſcretion be (as indeed the holy Ghoſt deſcribeth them to be) *Saints, by calling* (1 Cor. 1.2.) and *faithfull Brethren*, Gal. 1.

Gal. 1. 2. and that not onely by externall profeſſion, for theſe are too high ſtiles for hypocrites, but in ſome meaſure of ſinceritie and truth.

Secondly, We read *Act.* 2. 47. that the *Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*; and how then ſhall wee adde to the Church ſuch as God addeth not? ſuch as have no ſhew of any ſaving worke upon them to any ſpirituall diſcerning? ought not the Lords Stewards to be faithfull in Gods houſe, and to doe nothing therein, but as they ſee the Lord goe before them? receiving whom he receiveth, and refuſing whom he refuſeth, caſting out whom he caſteth out. Doth not the Apoſtle *Paul* upon this ground direct the *Romans* to receive *a weake beleever, becauſe the Lord hath received him?* Rom. 14. 1. 2. 3.

Thirdly, The Lord Jeſus maketh the profeſſion of the faith of his name, and ſuch a profeſsion as *fleſh and bloud hath not revealed* to a man but his heavenly Father, to be the rocke on which his viſible Church is built; for he ſpeaketh of ſuch a Church whereunto he committeth the keys of his kingdome, and that is the viſible Church, *Mat.* 16. 16. to 19. Now if ſuch a profeſsion be the rocke and foundation of a viſible Church, then wee ſhall build a Church without a foundation, if wee receive ſuch members into the Church as doe not hold forth ſuch a profeſsion, but either through ignorance make no profeſsion at all, or ſuch a verball profeſsion as ſavoureth not of any bleſſed worke of the Father by his Spirit upon their hearts. And doth not the Lord expoſtulate with *ſuch a gueſt* as comes into the fellowſhip of his Church, even unto his Table, *not having a wedding garment*, Mat. 22. 12. And doth not expoſtulation intimate a *Taxation alſo of them, by whoſe connivence he came in*, where he ſaith, *how commeſt thou in hither?* And doth not Chriſt in the parable impute it to the *ſleepineſſe* (that is, to the remiſſeneſſe and negligence) *of his ſervants*, that tares were ſowen in his field amongſt the wheat, *Mat.* 13. 25. 38. 39.

Fourthly, Such as have onely a *forme of godlineſſe, and deny the power of it, wee are forbidden to joyne with, and commanded to turne from them*, 2 Tim. 3. 5.

Fiftly, Can any man judge ſuch perſons fit materialls for the conſtituting and edifying of a Church, who are more fit for the ruin and deſtruction of the Church; ſuch as leave their firſt love

(as all hypocrites will at length?) They procure the removall of the candleſtick, *Rev.* 2.4. Wee paſſe by the types of the old Teſtament, which yet are not without their due weight; it was touched above, that *rough ſtones were not laid in the building of Solomons Temple, till they were hewen and prepared before*, 1 King. 6. 7. and behold *a greater then Solomon is here*, and a greater *Temple* then that of *Solomons*; the attendance and *watchfulneſſe of the porters ſuffering none to enter into the Temple that were uncleane in any thing*, 2 Chro. 23. 19. doth it not evidently tipe forth the watchfulneſſe of the Officers of the Church of Chriſt to ſuffer none uncleane (uncleane in eſtate or courſe of life) to enter into the fellowſhip of the Church, which ought to be a Communion of Saints?

Well then, if all the members of the Church ought to be *Saints by calling and faithfull brethren*, it cannot be thought an unſeaſonable curioſitie, but rather held a due and faithfull watchfulneſſe in the Officers and body of every Church of Chriſt, to take a due triall of men by a *confeſſion of ſinnes*, as *Iohn Baptiſt* did, *Mat.* 3.6. and by a *profeſſion of their faith*, as *Philip* did, *Act.* 8. 37. before they receive them into the Church as members of the body of the Lord Ieſus: neither was it an exceſſive auſteritie in *Iohn*, but an holy faithfulneſſe and godly zeale, not onely to repulſe the *Scribes and Phariſes*, Mat. 3. 7. but the *prophane people alſo* from his Baptiſme, *Luk* 3. 7. as thoſe who were a *generation of vipers, and had not yet brought forth fruit meet for repentance*, ver. 7.8 and therefore themſelves were not meete for his Baptiſme, which was a baptiſme of repentance, *Luk.* 3. 3. Nevertheleſſe, in this triall, we doe not exact eminent meaſure, either of knowledge, or holineſſe, but doe willingly ſtretch out our hands to receive *the weake in faith*, ſuch in whoſe ſpirits wee can diſcerne *the leaſt meaſure of breathing and panting after Chriſt, in their ſenſible feeling of a loſt eſtate*: for we had rather 99. hypocrites ſhould periſh through preſumption, then one humble ſoule belonging to Chriſt ſhould ſinke under diſcouragement or deſpaire; and by reaſon of theſe hypocrites received into the Church, it is that the Church is ſaid to have in it good and bad, wheate and tares; for tares, (as *Hierome* ſaith) are like to wheate.

SECT.

Sect. IV.

COme wee now to give account of the ſecond point, why wee receive ſuch into the Church by way of *Covenant*.

1. Meete it is that as the whole Church was received as one *body* unto Chriſt by profeſſing their entrance into covenant with God as hath been ſhewed above in the third Propoſition of the fifth part, ſo every member of the Church ſhould be received into the ſame fellowſhip, by profeſſion of their taking hold of the ſame Covenant; *Eadem eſt ratio partium & totius*, ther is the ſame reaſon of the whole and of the parts, in ſuch things as concerne the common nature of both; And as all relatives doe, they mutually argue one another. Hence it is that when godly ſtrangers (who had joyned themſelves to the Lord, to wit, by faith, to ſerve him, to love his name, and keepe his Sabbath) were to be brought into the fellowſhip of the Lords houſe, they added this dutie over and above the former, they *tooke hold of the Covenant of the Lord*, Iſa. 56. 3,4,5,6,7, Surely not *by faith onely*, for their *perſonall ſalvation*, (for ſo they took hold of the covenant before *when they joyned themſelves to the Lord*, ver. 3.) but by their profeſſion of their *acceptance of the Covenant, and ſubjection to it, which the Lord maketh with his Church and people, whom hee cauſeth to paſſe into the bond of the Covenant*, Ezek. 20. 37.

Object. It is objected firſt, that the place in *Iſaiah* ſpeaketh of ſuch *ſtrangers as were proſelytes*, who in joyning themſelves to the *Lord*, were therein alſo joyned unto the *Church*, for ſo *joyning to the Lord, implyeth joyning to the Church*, Jer. 50. 5. Zech. 2. 11.

Anſw. 1. They that joyned to the Lord in thoſe Texts of *Ieremie* & *Zachary*, did indeed in ſo doing joyne in a Church-body alſo; for they who are there ſpoken of were a multitude, concurring and conſenting in the ſame Covenant, to joyne to the Lord, and to become his people; but here in *Iſaiah*, the Eunuch and ſtrangers are ſaid to be joyned to the Lord, who yet were not joyned to the Church, but ready to complaine *that the Lord had utterly deprived them of that libertie of joyning to the Church, and had utterly ſeparated them from his people*, ver. 3. As indeed he had by expreſſe Law *ſeparated them*, that is *prohibited them from entring into the Congregation of*

the Lord for ever, Deut. 23.1,2,3. Againſt which Law the Lord comforteth them with this promiſe of the Goſpel, that in the new Teſtament, neither their *Eunuchiall* eſtate, nor the *alienation* or *ſtrangerneſſe* of any Nation, ſhall be an impediment unto their entrance into the Lords houſe, which is the Church.

The joyning (there ſpoken of) is not their joyning to the Lord and his people as *Proſelyt s* of the Church; for though they were joyned to the Lord, yet they complained of their diſ-joyning and ſeparating from the Lords people, but the Lord comforteth them with this promiſe, that *ſuch as are joyned to the Lord* he will hereafter bring them to *his houſe*; no bodily *infirmitie*, (as that of the *Eunuch*) nor nationall *pollution* (as that of ſome *ſtrangers*) ſhould hinder their admittance into his Church, onely this the Lord requireth both of the *Eunuches*, ver. 4. and of the *ſtrangers*, ver. 6. who had joyned themſelves *to the Lord before*, that they doe *alſo* take *hold of his Covenant* (as antecedent to their entrance into Church-fellowſhip,) to wit, take hold of it by *ſolemne profeſſion* of their acceptance of it, and of their ſubjection to it.

Object. 2. It is not credible that the Lord would ever ſeparate or debarre ſuch from Church-fellowſhip as were joyned to himſelfe by faith, who can thinke it? what reaſon can you give for it?

Anſw. The text is plaine, that *Eunuches*, *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, were ſeparated from the Church or Congregation of *Iſrael* for ever, without exception of *godlyneſſe* or *ungodlineſſe*. Some indeed make a doubt whether the Law againſt *Moabites* and *Ammonites* reached to the *women* of thoſe Nations; but againſt *men* the Law is cleare. But if the Law had excluded them onely upon point of their own *ungodlineſſe*, that was no *ſingular* courſe to them. No Nation under heaven could expect admiſſion into the Church of *Iſrael*, unleſſe they *believed* in the God of *Iſrael*. What reaſon God might have for excluding the *Eunuches*, wee leave to his ſoveraigne wiſdome. But yet himſelfe giveth a plaine reaſon for it againſt the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, taken from their *malignant enmity* againſt Gods people, *Deut.* 23.4,5,6. Againſt the *Eunuches* he giveth no expreſſe reaſon; the *authoritie of the Law-giver* is reaſon ſufficient; who can tell whether God would not thereby type out the debarring of *barren Chriſtians* from Church-fellowſhip?

Object. 3.

Object. 3. The word *ſeparation*, implyeth they had been ſometime of the Church; for it cannot be ſaid in common ſenſe, that any can be *ſeparated* from that ſocietie of which they never were.

Anſw. Why not? What is *ſeparated* but *ſevered*? May not *England* be *ſevered* from *Scotland* by the river of *Tweed*? and from *France* and *Germany* and *Holland*, by the Sea? though they were never joyned to any of thoſe Nations? Did not God make the Starres to *ſeparate betweene the day and the night?* (for it is the ſame word in the Originall, *Gen.* 1. 14.) and yet day and night were never joyned in one ſociety.

So that from the place in *Iſaiah*, wee have two paſſages of our practiſes in *admitting Church-members*, witneſſed unto and confirmed by the Lord.

1. That thoſe whom the Lord *joyneth to the Church* in the new Teſtament, are ſuch as have been joyned *to himſelfe*, to love him, and to ſerve him, and keep his Sabbaths.

2. That they doe alſo *take hold of his Covenant* With *his Church*, before he bring them into his holy *Mountaine* which is *his Church*.

Both which are the more to be obſerved in this place, becauſe the place is a *propheſie* of what the Lord *will doe* in the dayes of the *new Teſtament*, to wit, when his houſe ſhall be called *an houſe of prayer unto all Nations*, ver. 9. which is proper to the *times of the Goſpel*.

Object. 4. But the *Covenant* here ſpoken of, hath nothing to doe with the *Church Covenant*, for the Covenant is the *Lords between him and his people*, but the *Church Covenant is between the members of the Church* one towards another.

Anſw. This objection was prevented before in the firſt point; for when the Lord entreth into covenant with his people, that is, with his Church, his Church either expreſly, or by ſilent conſent covenanteth with him, and alſo one with another, to yeeld profeſſed ſubjection to him, as hath been ſhewed above.

But though this place *propheſying of the dayes of the new Teſtament*, ſpeak expreſly of *taking hold of the Covenant* before entring into the Church, yet let no man wonder why there is ſo little expreſſe mention of the peoples taking hold of the Covenant in the new Teſtament, when this promiſe commeth to be accompliſhed. In the *old Teſtament*, where the *Church and Common-wealth* grew up together in divine inſtitution and adminiſtration, there is expreſſe mention of

of this Covenant and the Church being nationall, and all the *Magiſtrates* being members of the Church from the firſt plantation of it, the Covenant of the Lord with his Church was not at all *ſuſpitious* to them, (who were parties to it themſelves) but very acceptable; but in the dayes of the *new Teſtament*, the *Magiſtrates* and Princes of the earth being *Aliens* and *enemies* to the Church, the Apoſtles thought it meete to ſpeake of this Covenant not *plainly*, but as it were in *Parables and ſimilitudes*, as knowing the name of *Covenants* and *Covenanters* might breed no ſmall *jeatouſies in Civill States*, as ſeeming moſt dangerous to civill peace, but yet in apt ſimilitudes they ſo deſcribe the eſtate of Churches as doth neceſſarily imply a joynt Covenant, both *betweene the Lord, and them one with another*: which may ſerve for a ſecond argument to prove the point in hand, the receiving of members by way of Covenant; for 1. they ſo deſcribe every Church of God, as a *Citie of God*, as the *new Hieruſalem*, as the *Church* of the *Iewes* at their firſt converſion is ſtyled, *Rev.* 21. 4. and the *Church* of the *Iewes*, though it may be a more *glorious Church* then any of the *Churches of the Gentiles*, yet it partaketh in the *common nature* of them all, *every true Church* is as well a *Citie of God*, as the *Church of the Iewes*; and hence the Members of the Church of *Epheſus* are called *fellow-Citizens* with the Saints, as being of the houſhold, or Church of God, *Eph.* 2 19. Now every *Citie* is founded in ſome *Confederacy* by oath or ſuchlike bond, and every *Citizen* is received into the ſame Citie, by taking the *ſame* oath, or entring into the ſame bond, wherein the whole Citie ſtandeth ingaged; which holdeth forth to an intelligent heart, that if every Church of the new Teſtament be a Citie, and the Members thereof fellow-Citizens, then as the whole Church is planted and founded *in ſome Covenant* or *Confederacie*; ſo every Member of the Church is implanted and received into the ſame body, by *taking hold of the ſame Covenant*, and profeſſing ſubjection thereunto.

Againe, when the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of the planting of the Church of *Corinth*, calleth it *eſpouſing* of it as a chaſte Virgin unto Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. It implyeth plainly, that he drew them all as one body to profeſſe their acceptance of Chriſt as an *husband* to them all, and of one another, *as members* of the *ſame body*: if he had ſpoken of his *converſion* of their *particular ſoules* unto Chriſt, he would not have

have ſpoken of them as *one Virgin*, but ſo *many ſouls* ſo *many Virgins*; but now ſpeaking of them all as *one Virgin*, it plainly argueth he joyned them all as one virgin into one body, and that one body into a *Covenant of Eſpouſalls* with Chriſt Jeſus; for there are no Eſpouſalls without a covenant; and therefore they that will take hold of their Eſpouſage, muſt take hold of their covenant.

3. The mutuall relation wherein all the members in the Church ſtand one to another, members to members, and all of them to their Officers, and their Officers to them, together with their mutuall intereſt one in another, and mutuall power one over another, doe all of them neceſſarily imply a mutuall confederacie one with another; and that whoſoever will partake herein, muſt partake in their confederacie. Suppoſe a godly Chriſtian come over into theſe parts, (as every yeare ſome or other doe) there is not any Miniſter of any of our Churches can *uſurpe Paſtorall authoritie over him*, unleſſe that Chriſtian *call him thereunto*, or profeſſe his ſubjection to his Miniſtration, according to God. Nor can ſuch a man expect any *Miniſters watchfulneſſe over him as his Miniſter*, unleſſe the Miniſter ſee juſt cauſe to *accept ſuch a charge, and profeſſe ſo much*. No *Church* in the Countrey, nor all the members of any Church, can take upon them to *Cenſure any ſtranger*, though an inhabitant amongſt them, unleſſe *he give up himſelfe to them*, and profeſſe his ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt amongſt them, Nor can *he* Challenge *ſuch watchfullneſſe from them*, unleſſe he have given them *a juſt call* to take upon them that care over him. That *Chriſtian libertie* which the Lord Ieſus by his bloud hath purchaſed for his Church, and for all his children, giveth them all *libertie to chooſe their owne Officers*, and their *owne fellow Members*, unto whom to commit the care of their ſoules according to the rules of the Goſpel. We ſpeak not of *Infants*, who *make choice in their parents*, but of ſuch who know their libertie, and are called to ſtand faſt in it: till then that a man tender and offer himſelfe to the Church, (to the Officers and members of it) they have no power to *receive* him; For the Churches receiving a beleever (which is the Apoſtles *word*, Rom. 14 1.) implyeth and preſuppoſeth his *offering* and *giving up* of himſelfe unto them, in a *profeſſed ſubjection* to the Lord, and unto them, according to the will of God; and their *receiving* of him, implyeth and holdeth forth no leſſe then their *profeſſed acceptance* of him un-

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to all thoſe holy liberties with them, and performance of all ſuch ſpirituall duties to him, which belong to all the fellow-members of the ſame body; and let men call this expreſſion of mutuall agreement by what name they pleaſe, this is no other then what wee call *Church-Covenant*.

Sect. V.

LEt us proceed then to give account of the third point, why we communicate ſo much power to the *people*, as to propound *receiving of Members* unto their approbation and conſent: our reaſons are theſe:

1. From the like power given unto them by Chriſt, for the caſting out of ſcandalous and corrupt members, *Matth.* 18. 17. 1. *Cor.* 5 5. if the Church muſt be *told of every member* that is to be *caſt out*, and when he is to be *caſt out*, they are to *deliver him to Satan*: then the Church muſt be told of every member that is *received*, and when he is to be received, they are *to receive him* into the fellowſhip of the Lord, and of his Church; but the former is cleare from thoſe Scriptures, and conſequently the latter. It is a received Maxime, *Ejuſdem eſt poteſtatis operire & claudere, inſtituere & deſtituere* (as they call it,) they that have power to *ſhut* the doores of the Church by excommunication, they have power *to open* the doores of the Church by admitting to Communion.

2. From the Example of the *Church at Hieruſalem*, Act. 9. 26. who when *Paul* aſſayeth to joyne himſelfe unto them, did not at firſt *receive* him, becauſe the Diſciples were not ſatisfied in his ſpirituall good eſtate, untill *Barnabas* by his teſtymony of him had removed their ſcruple: which argueth the *private Brethren* in a Church as well as *publique Officers*, muſt be ſatisfied in him who is to be received into Communion with them.

3. From the Churches power in Electing and calling Miniſters to office. It hath been ſhewed above, that it belongeth to the people the body of the Church, to *chooſe and call their owne Officers*, according to the ſpeech of *Cyprian, Lib.* 1. *Epiſt.* 41. *Plebs maximè poteſtatem habet, vel ſacerdotes dignos eligendi, vel indignos recuſandi.* And if they have ſuch power of chooſing worthy *Miniſters*, and refuſing the unworthy, how much more of receiving worthy *Chriſtians*,

ſtians, and refuſing of unworthy. Yea, in the Epiſtle going before, he ſpeaketh expreſly, *he had much adoe to perſwade the people to receive ſome, whoſe repentance was not ſo cleare to them*; which argueth evidently their power in receiving Members.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning our order and forme in adminiſtration of Gods publick Worſhip.

SECT. I.

THE Church being gathered and furniſhed with able helps, *Officers* and *Breathren*, they proceed to the *adminiſtration* of all the publick Ordinances in pnblick Aſſemblies, eſpecially on every Lords day; wherein our principall care and deſire is to adminiſter and partake *in all*, and *no more then all*, the ordinances of Chriſt himſelfe, and in all thoſe (ſo farre as the Lord hath lent us light) in their *native puritie and ſimplicitie*, without any dreſſing or painting of humane inventions. For as the firſt Commandement requireth us to worſhip him with his owne onely true worſhip, as he hath appointed in his Word, without adding ought thereto, or taking ought therefrom, *Iſa*.29.13. *Deut*.12.32. So we beleeve it to be unlawfull for any Church to take upon them to obſerve, much leſſe for the Officers of their owne or other Churches to *impoſe* upon them *any inſtitutions of their owne* (whether in *doctrine* or *worſhip*, or *government*, but what the Lord hath appointed in his Word.

Our reaſon hereof (one in ſtead of many) is taken from the extent of the Commiſſion of the Lord Jeſus given to his Apoſtles, which is as large as ever was given to any Church-governours, and yet reacheth no further then to teach the people to obſerve *all things whatſoever I have commanded you*, Mat. 28.20. If the Apoſtles themſelves teach the Churches to obſerve more then hee hath commanded them, they goe beyond the bounds of their Commiſſion. The Apoſtles in the *Synod* in *Hieruſalem*, laid upon the Churches *no other burden* then neceſſarie things, *Acts* 15.29. Neceſſary

they were, ſome of them in their *owne nature*, others for the *preſent eſtate* of things to avoid offence, and when they ceaſed to be offenſive, the prohibition of them ceaſed to binde.

Obiect. If any ſhall ſay, the Apoſtles Commiſſion reacheth onely to *matters of ſubſtance*, not *circumſtances*, of worſhip and formes of *neceſsity*, not *indifferency*,

Wee anſwer, let them ſhew us another Commiſſion to authorize them to put lawes upon the Churches for matters of *circumſtance* (of formes and of *indifferency*) and we ſhall ſubmit, but the Scripture holds forth no ſuch Commiſſion given to any of the ſonnes of men ſince the world began.

That much urged place, 1 *Cor.* 14, 40. doth not authorize the Church, nor any Church-governours, to make lawes for the obſervation of ſuch things as they ſhall account *decent* and *orderly*; but onely provideth that all the *ordinances of God*, whether prayer, or propheſie, or ſinging of Pſalmes, or tongues, or interpretations, be *all of them done decently, without uncomelineſſe, and orderly, without confuſion*; and that this place reacheth no further, appeareth evidently from hence, that if this place ſhould give unto the Church, or unto Church-governours, authority to preſcribe and command *decent* and *orderly* things at their owne diſcretion, a man could not tranſgreſſe the *Commandement* of the Church, but he ſhould alſo tranſgreſſe the *Commandement* of the Apoſtle; but the contrary is evident. For ſuppoſe the Church or Church-governours ſhould make an order, that Miniſters ſhould alwayes preach in a *gowne*, the thing is decent enough, but nevertheleſſe if a man ſhal preach in a cloake, he ſhall tranſgreſſe the order of the Church, but not of the Apoſtle; for he that preacheth in a cloake, preacheth decently alſo; which plainly argueth, that ſuch a commandement of the Church, is not grounded upon the commandement of the Apoſtle.

Sect. II.

FIrſt then when we come together in the Church, according to the Apoſtles direction, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. we make prayers and interceſſions and thankſgivings for our ſelves and for all men, not in any *preſcribed* forme of prayer, or *ſtudied Liturgie*, but in ſuch a manner,

manner; as the Spirit of Grace and of prayer (who teacheth all the people of God, what and how to pray, *Rom.* 8. 26,27.) helpeth our infirmities, we having reſpect therein to the neceſſities of the people; the eſtate of the times, and the worke of Chriſt in our hands.

After prayer, either the *Paſtor* or *Teacher*, readeth a Chapter in the Bible, and *expoundeth* it, giving the *ſenſe, to cauſe the people to underſtand the reading*, according to *Neh.* 8.8. And in ſundry Churches the other (whether *Paſtor* or *Teacher*) who *expoundeth* not, he *preacheth* the Word, and in the afternoone the other who *preached* in the morning doth uſually (if there be time) *read* and *preach* and he that *expounded* in the morning *preacheth* after him.

Before Sermon, and many times after, we ſing a Pſalme, and becauſe the former tranſlation of the Pſalmes, doth in many things vary from the originall, and many times paraphaſeth rather then tranſlateth; beſides divers other defects (which we cover in ſilence) wee have endeavoured a new tranſlation of the Pſalmes into *Engliſh meetre*, as neere the originall as wee could expreſſe it in our *Engliſh* tongue, ſo farre as for the preſent the Lord hath been pleaſed to helpe us, and thoſe Pſalmes wee ſing, both in our publike Churches, and in private.

The ſeales of the Covenant (to wit, the Sacrament of Baptiſme and the Lords Supper) are adminiſtred, either by the *Paſtor* or by the *Teacher*; and though with ſome godly learned Divines, it be a queſtion whether the *Teacher* may diſpence the ſeales, yet the queſtion doth rather concerne Schoole-Doctors, then the *Teachers* of a particular Church, but wee who have onely the *Teachers* of particular Churches, doe beleeve that they to whom the *preaching or diſpenſing of the Goſpell* (or *Covenant* of grace) unto the Church is committed, to them is committed alſo the diſpenſing of the *ſeales of the Covenant*; but to the *Teacher* as well as to the *Paſtor*, is committed the diſpenſing of the Goſpell (the Covenant of grace) unto the Church, and therefore to him (as well as to the other) is committed the diſpenſing of the ſeales of the Covenant.

Both the Sacraments wee diſpence, according to the firſt inſtitution, Baptiſme to *Diſciples*, and (who are included in them) *their ſeed*. The Lords Supper to ſuch as neither want *knowledge* nor *grace* to *examine and judge themſelves* before the Lord. Such as lie under

any offence publickly know, doe firſt remove the offence, before they preſent themſelves to the Lords Table; according to *Mat.* 5 23,24. The members of any Church, if any be preſent, who bring Letters teſtimoniall with them to our Churches, wee admit them *to the Lords Table* with us, and their *children* alſo (if occaſionally in their travell they be borne with us) upon like recommendation wee admit to *Baptiſme*. The prayers wee uſe at the adminiſtration of the ſeales, are not any *ſet formes* preſcribed to us, but conceived by the Miniſter, according to the preſent occaſion, and the nature of the dutie in hand. Ceremonies wee uſe none, but are careſull to adminiſter all things according to the primitive inſtitutions. The *Father* preſenteth his owne child to *baptiſme*, as being baptized by the right of *his Covenant*, and not of the Covenant unto God-fathers and god-mothers, (for there is no ſuch covenant of God unto them and their god-ſones) and therefore we have no uſe of them, but omit them in Baptiſme; as the Apoſtle caſt out *loue-feaſts* from the Lords Supper, being both of them alike *ſuperadditions to the Lords inſtitutions*. 1 Cor. 11. 23,24. The Lotds Supper we adminiſter for the *time*, *once a moneth at leaſt*, and for the *geſture*, to the people *ſitting*; according as Chriſt adminiſtred it to his Diſciples ſitting, (*Mat.* 26. 20. 26.) who alſo made a Symbolicall uſe of it, to teach the Church their majoritie over their Miniſters in ſome caſes, and their judiciall authoritie, as co-ſeſſors with him at the laſt Judgment, (*Luk.* 22. 27. to 30.) which maketh us looke at kneeling at the Lords Supper, not only as an adoration deviſed by man, but alſo as a violation by man of the inſtitution of Chriſt, diminiſhing part of the Counſell of God, and of the honour and comfort of the Church held forth in it.

In time of *ſolemnization* of the Supper, the Miniſter having taken, bleſſed, and broken the bread, and commanded all the people to take and eate it, as the body of Chriſt broken for them, he taketh it himſelfe, and giveth it to all that ſit at Table with him, and from the Table it is reached by the *Deacons* to the people ſitting in the next ſeates about them, the Miniſter ſitting in his place at the Table.

After they have all partaked in the bread, hee taketh the cup in like manner, and *giveth thankes a new*, (bleſſeth it) according to the example of Chriſt in the Evangeliſt, who deſcribes the inſtitution

Mat.

Mat. 26.27. *Mark.* 14.23. *Luk.* 22.17. All of them in ſuch a way as ſetteth forth the Elements, not bleſſed *together*, but either of them *apart*; the bread firſt by it ſelfe, and afterwards the wine by it ſelfe; for what reaſon the Lord himſelfe beſt knoweth, and wee cannot be ignorant, that a received ſolemne bleſſing expreſly performed by himſelfe, doth apparantly call upon the whole aſſembly to look againe for a ſupernaturall and ſpeciall bleſſing in the ſame Eliment alſo as well as in the former; for which the Lord will bee againe ſought to doe it for us.

After tht celebration of the Supper, a Pſalme of thankſgiving is ſung, (according to *Mat.* 36.30.) and the Church diſmiſſed with a bleſſing.

Sect. III.

IN the afternoone after publick prayer offered up to Gods either by the *Paſtor* or *Teacher*, and the Word read and expounded by them who preached in the morning (if their be time) and preached by the other, and the Sacrament of Baptiſme adminiſtred, (if any of the Church doe offer their children thereunto) the *Deacons* (who ſit in a ſeate under the *Elders*, yet in ſundry Churches lifted up higher then the other pewes) doe call upon the people, that as God hath proſpered them, and hath made their hearts willing, there is now time left for contribution: preſently the people from the higheſt to the loweſt in ſundry Churches do ariſe, the firſt pew firſt, the next next, and ſo the reſt in order, and preſent before the Lord their holy offerings. For in the old Teſtament at their ſolemne feaſts none was to *appeare before the Lord empty*, Deut. 16.16. And the Lords day is onely unto Chriſtians the ordinary *ſolemne feaſt of the Lord*: in the new Teſtament the Chriſtians laid downe their oblations at the *Apoſtles* feete, (*Acts* 4.35.) into whoſe place, for that ſervice, *Deacons* were ſubſtituted, *Acts* 6.3.

And to that purpoſe the Apoſtles gave order unto the Churches, that *upon the firſt day of the weeke every one ſhould lay by him, into the treaſury* (as the word ſignifieth) *for the ſupply of the Saints, as God had proſpered them*, 1 Cor. 1.2. Which ordiance *Juſtine Martyr* ſpeaketh of in his time, that *the abler ſort on the Lords day did contribut to the neceſſities of the brethren*, in the end of the ſecond Apologie.

gie. And *Cyprian* rebuketh a wealthy rich widow for beleeving *ſhee could celebrate the Lords day* (as holy) *and yet neglect to contribute to the Lords treaſurie*, in his firſt Sermon *de Eleemoſynâ. Locuples & dives Dominicum celebrare te credis, quæ Corbonam omnino non reſpicis?*

After the contribution ended, the time left is taken up in ſundry Churches in the publike tryall and admiſſion of ſuch as are to be received Members into the Church, in ſuch manner as hath been before declared; and ſo after a Pſalme of praiſe to God, with thankſgiving, and prayer to God for a bleſſing upon all the ordinances adminiſtred that day, and a bleſſing pronounced upon the people, the Aſſembly is diſmiſſed.

Beſides the celebration of the Lords day, every weeke we ſometimes upon extraordinary occaſions, either of notable *judgements*, doe ſet a part a day of *humiliation*, or upon ſpeciall *mercies* wee ſet apart a day of *thankeſgiving*. The grounds whereof wee conceive are generally knowne and approved amongſt Chriſtians. Moreover, every weeke in moſt of our Churches, Lectures are kept on ſome or other of the weeke dayes; ſo that ſuch whoſe hearts God maketh willing, and his hand doth not detaine by bodily infirmitie, or other neceſſary imployments, (if they dwell in the heart of the Bay) may have opportunitie to heare the Word almoſt every day of the weeke in one Church or other, not farre diſtant from them.

Sect. IV.

In all theſe adminiſtrations, onely two or three things may ſeeme to require clearing from the Word of God; as

1. Why in our publick prayers; wee forbeare to uſe *ſet formes* of preſcript Liturgies.

2. Why in our Sacraments wee doe not admit the members of the Church of *England* to the fellowſhip of the *Lords Table*, and their children to Baptiſme, as was ſaid before, wee did receive the Members of other Churches in this Countrey.

For the former, the reaſons uſually given may ſuffice.

1. From the patterne of all the Churches, both in the old and new Teſtament, God never gave leave to any ordinary Officers of

of his church, neither did any of them take leave to impoſe any formes of Liturgie upon any Church. And yet if ever there had been place for preſcribing ſet formes to any, it had been moſt ſeaſonable in the *Iewiſh Synagogues*, whoſe members being as children under age, (*Gal.*4. 2,3.) might ſtand in moſt need of ſuch a helpe. It is eaſily acknowledged, *Moſes* preſcribed a forme of bleſſing, *Numb*, 6. 23. to 26. and *David* ſundry Pſalmes of praiſe and prayers; and the Lord Ieſus taught his Diſciples not onely to pray *after this manner*, but thus, or theſe words, *Luke* 11. 2. But neither were theſe *ordinary* Officers of the churches, neither did they preſcribe any uſe but *arbitrary* and occaſionall of theſe formes; as they might ſuite our occaſions. God by immediate revelation, and by the hand of his *extraordinary Meſſengers*, may preſcribe this or that forme to his Church, but will not warrant ordinary Officers (who have onely received a common meaſure of the Spirit) to doe the like. God who forbad his people to make to themſelves Images or imaginations, inventions, and formes of worſhip, hath not reſtrained himſelfe to ſet up what Images or formes himſelfe ſeeth good.

Obiect. Theſe formes of prayer or praiſe, though as they be *parts of holy Scripture* they are of God, yet as they are *applyed* without ſpeciall commandement to be the matter or forme of a prayer or thankſgiving at this time, ſo they are the *device* of man, &c.

Anſw. They are not applyed to be matter and forme of prayer or thankſgiving without commandement, or at leaſt without ſuch directions as amount to a lawfull warrant from God; for *Moſes* expreſly ſayeth, *On this wiſe ſhall yee bleſſe the children of Iſraell and ſay unto them*, (Numb. 6. 23.) The 102 Pſalme is expreſſed in the title, not onely to be a prayer *of one that was afflicted, but of any in like eſtate*, And the Apoſtles exhortation is generall concerning all the Pſalmes and hymnes and ſpirituall ſongs of *David*, (as well as of others) that we ſhould ſing them with holy melody unto the Lord, *Ephe.* 5. 19. and Chriſts words, *Luke* 11. 2. *When yee pray ſay our Father, &c.*

A ſecond reaſon why we forbeare a ſet forme of preſcript Liturgies, is taken from the meaning of the ſecond Commandement, which we conceive prohibiteth ſuch preſcript Liturgies.

It is a rule generally known in the expoſition of the Commandements,

dements, that all ſinnes forbidden in the Word of God, are reduced to the ten Commandements, and fall under the prohibition of one of them or other, for there is no ſinne but is a tranſgreſſion of ſome or other commandemant of the law, 1 *Joh.*3.4. and upon the two Tables of the *Law hang all the Law and the Prophets*, Mat. 22. 40. Now it is plaine, that all ſinnes are not contained in the letter of the ten Commandements, and therefore there is no judicious expoſitor of them, but openeth the letter of the Commandements by *Synecdoches* and *Metonymies*; *Synecdoches* to comprehend all ſinnes of the *like kinde*, and all the *degrees* thereof, and *Metonymies* to comprehend all *cauſes* and *meanes* and occaſions thereof; ſo that for opening the ſecond Commandement, which forbids both making and the worſhipping of any image or ſimilitude, it is requiſite to conſider in what ſenſe or reſpects *Images* or *ſimilitudes* are forbidden: Images or ſimilitudes are for bidden in the ſecond Commandement, not as *objects* of worſhip, for all *falſe objects* of worſhip are the *falſe Gods* forbidden in the firſt Commandement; *Images* then and *ſimilitudes* are forbidden in the ſecond Commandement, not as falſe objects of worſhip, wherein the worſhip is terminated and faſtned, but as *falſe meanes of worſhipping* the true God. For ſo are the Images conſidered that are forbiden in the Word. The *golden calfe* was not conſidered as the *God of Iſrael*, that brought them up out of the Land of *Ægypt.* but as an *Image* of that *Jehovah*, which did bring them up out of the Land of *Ægypt.* Whence it is ſaid, that *Aaron* proclaimed a feaſt, not to the *calfe*, but to *Jehovah*, whereof the *calfe* was but an *Image*. *To Morrow*, ſaith he, *is a ſolemnitie* (or feaſt) *to Jehovah*, Exod. 32. 5. The *Calfe* therefore was not the god, but the Image of the god which they worſhipped, as that which reſembled him, and put them in minde of him, helped their hearts nearer to him, or his preſence nearer to them: As it is written in the Pſalme, that *they turned their glory into the ſimilitude of an oxe th at eateth graſſe*, Pſal. 106. 20. And in this oxe or calfe they looked at *Jehovah as neare unto them, and as going with them, and before them*, Exod. 32 1. Furthermore, the Image forbidden in th e ſecond Commandement, is not onely a *falſe meanes* of worſhip, deviſed by man, but a *falſe manner* of worſhip alſo; and therefore when the *Samsritane*-ſtrangers knew not the *manner* of worſhipping God in the *Calves of Jeroboam*, it is ſaid, they knew not the

manner

manner of the god of the Country (2 Kings 17. 26.) and one of the Priests of the high places was sent to teach them the *manner of the fear* (or worship) *of Iehovah*, ver. 28. and so *they feared Iehovah after the former manner*, v. 34. and that was *in serving him in the graven Images of their owne devising*, v. 41.

So that under this one kind of false worship of God in graven Images, is forbidden by a *Synecdoche*, not onely all worship of God in *carved, or molten, or painted Images*, (all bodily representations of God) but all *spiritual Images also, which are the imaginations and inventions of men*, whether they be ordained for worship, as the *high places* erected to the true God. 2 *Chron.* 33. 17. and the *devised feast of the eighth moneth*, 2 King. 12. 33. or whether they be brought in and used for *helps and means* of worship, as the *strange fire of Nadab*, Lev. 10. 1, 2. and *Davids new Cart* to carry the Arke, 2 *Sam.* 6. 3. with 1 *Sam.* 15. 13. or whether they be used for *manner and forme* of worship, as *preaching in the wisdom of mans words*, (or in carnal eloquence) which is but a painted Image of preaching (1 *Cor.* 2. 4.) and so forbidden in this second Commandement. In like sort, *Womens praying in publick bare-headed, and men covered*, 1 Cor. 11. 4, 5. Mens praying or prophecying in *strange tongues*, and many of them at once, 1 Cor. 14. 22. 26. the celebrating of *love-feasts* in holy *Assemblies*, *together with the Lords Supper.* (1 Cor. 11. 21. 23. 34.) are all of them Images or imaginations of men, formes, or *manners* of worship devised and used by man, but not ordained by God, and so forbidden in this second Commandement.

The reason whereof is taken from the perfection of the wisdom of God revealed in Scripture, to *make the man of God perfect to every good work*, 2 Tim. 3. 17. No wisdom of mans device, as any other worship, or any other *helpes* or *meanes* of worship, or any *formes* or *manners* of worship, acceptable to God, but what the wisdome of God hath directed us in his Word. Besides, the Church is compleat in Christ, (*Coloss.* 2. 10.) so as we need no other *Priest* to make atonement but him, nor other spirituall *King* but him to rule our consciences, no other *Prophet* to teach us but himself, and such as he hath appointed to that end; thus the sum and substance both of Law and Gospel, lead us to rest in the ordinances of God, and not to helpe our selves by the inventions of men, for the administration of the worship of God. To apply this then to ser-

formes of prayer, deviſed by man, and preſcribed to be read out of a booke, and ſo taken up by one Church from another, as the formes of their worſhip, and as the meanes and helpe of their devotion, we finde no command or patterne for them in the Word, nor any promiſe of their acceptance. They are injoyned for means and helps of Gods worſhip, which he hath not ſanctified, and for formes of worſhip which God hath not acknowledged. What difference is there between the carrying of the *Arke* upon a *Cart*, and our *prayers* upon a *Book*? whereas both ſhould be *carried*, the one upon the *ſhoulders* of the Levites, the other upon the *gifts* of the Miniſters.

Object. 1. God that in generall commanded us to worſhip him in publick with all manner of prayers and ſupplication, (1 *Tim.* 2. 1.) but prayers upon a book, ſtinted Liturgies, are ſome manner of prayers.

Anſw. God hath in generall commandeth all manner of prayers, commandeth alſo in ſpeciall the ſeverall kinds of prayers, whether ſupplications, interceſſions, thankſgivings, or the like. He that commandeth the *Genus*, commandeth the diſtribution of it into all its *ſpecies*, but he that commandeth the *ſubject*, doth not alwaies command the diſtribution of it into all its *adjuncts*; he that commandeth prayer in general, alloweth every kinde of prayer, but not every form of prayer; for then God ſhould allow prayer in a *ſtrange tongue*, prayer *before Images*, prayer in the *corners of the ſtreets*, and the like.

Object. 2. Iffet-formes of preſcript prayers be unlawful, then ſet-formes of *confeſſion of Faith*, ſet formes of *Catechiſme* were unlawful alſo.

Anſw. 1. It followeth not; for the Apoſtle commandeth us to keep a forme *of ſound words in faith and love*, that is, in the principles of Religion, (2 *Tim.* 1. 13.) but he no where commandeth us to keep a forme of ſound prayer, unleſſe it be a forme of directions and inſtructions how to pray, and that is included in the former, and we diſlike it not.

Anſw. 2. The Apoſtle did not command *Timothy* to deviſe himſelf a form of ſound words, and to preſcribe the ſame to the Churches without ſuffering ought to be added to it, or taken from it, but what he muſt commend to others, were the things that he *heard*

of

of Paul among many witneſſes, which he is to commit to faithfull men, who might be able to teach others alſo. 2 Tim. 2. 2.

Thirdly, For a third reaſon why we do not take up ſet formes of preſcript Liturgies, is taken from the like proportion of ſet-formes, both of preſcript Liturgies, and of preſcript Sermons and Homilies. Prayer and preaching are both of them publike duties of the miniſterial office. The Apoſtles tell the Church they will lay down the Deacons imploiment, that they may give themſelves to the miniſtery of the word and prayer, *Act.* 6. In the one they are the mouth of God to the people; in the other, they are the mouth of the people unto God. If we preſcribe to one another ſet-formes of prayer, why not ſet-formes of Homilies? and then neither the Apoſtles, nor their ſucceſſors needed to have left off their employment in miniſtring to Tables, to attend the miniſtry of the word and prayer, (*Act.* 6 4.) for both are prepared to their hands by the preſcriptions of others. Whence alſo it will follow, that Miniſters ſhall little need to edifie the Church by their owne gifts receivet of Chriſt to that end, but may edifie them by the gifts of others. Yea, Miniſters, though deſtitute of miniſteriall gifts, may be fit for the publick diſcharge of their duties by the helpe of other mens gifts, both in prayer and preaching; and ſo indeed a preſcript Liturgie is properly a maintenance to all idol dumb miniſters: and in this forbearance of preſcript prayers, as we follow the example of the Church of Iſrael, and of the Apoſtolicall Churches, ſo we are not deſtitute of patternes in this caſe of thoſe that ſucceeded them. *Iuſtin Martyr* in his ſecond " Apologie for Chriſtians, a hundred and fifty yeares after Chriſt, " ſpeaketh of the Ruler of the Church, ſending up prayers and " praiſes to God, without mentioning any preſcript forme, ac- " cording to his power (or facultie) of prayer, or thank-giving " left him by the Apoſtles or others. And *Tertullian* about 203. " years after Chriſt, in his Apologie for Chriſtians, ſaith, they " prayed *ſine monitore, quia de pectore*, without a prompter, be- " cauſe they prayed from their heart; *Tertull. Apolog.* 30. that is " (as *Zeph.* on the place expoundeth it) they prayed not accord- " ing to the dictate of the Saints, to wit, in any form of words " preſcribed by them. And indeed, if in thoſe bloody times of perſecution, the Church had any ſet-forme of Liturgie, wherein they had been injoyned a forme of ſolemne prayers for their Emperour,

it had been an unskilfull and sinfull neglect, both in *Iustin* and *Tertullian*, to omit such publick evidences of their professed loyaltie and devotion to the State.

Sect. V.

Object. THe second thing in our administration of publick ordinances, whereof many require account of us is, why in the administration of the Sacraments, wee doe not admit the Members of the Churches of England, either themselves to the Lords supper, or their children to Baptisme, as wee receive the Members of other Churches in this Countrey.

Answ. Let it first be known what we do, and then consider upon what ground we do it.

1. Wee doe not admit the members of other Churches in this Countrey, unlesse they bring with them Letters of recommendation from the Churches whence they came; or at least unlesse those Churches have made known to us their desire, that their Members coming occasionally amongst us, may be received to the Lords Table, with our own, by vertue of communion of Churches.

2. Wee doe not admit the Members of other Churches to fellowship of the Lords Table, if either the persons themselves, or the Churches from whence they came, lie under any offence before the Church.

Now the grounds upon which wee thus walke, are these.

1. From the power requisite to the administration of the Sacraments, *viz.* to administer a Sacrament, is not an act of *Christian libertie*, that every Christian may dispense to whom he please, but an *act of power*, which Christ hath given to them who are called to be Ministers of the word, and by them to be dispensed unto the Church, whereof the Holy Ghost hath made them over-seers. They then over whom wee have no *ministerial power*, unto them wee may not dispense an *act of power*; but they who are Members of no Church, wee have no ministeriall power over them; and they who are Members of other Churches (not of our own) wee have no power over them, further then they are recommended to us from their own Churches, either by Letters, or by word of mouth, and such are all the members of the Churches in this Countrey whom

whom wee doe admit to communion with us at the Lords Table.

But now for our Brethren, who come out of *England*, many of them are altogether unknowne to us; and thoſe who are well known, (and it may be alſo well approved) yet they bring no Letters of recommendations to us from thoſe Churches who had intereſt in them, and power over them. And beſides, wee know that thoſe who have been members of any pariſh Church in *England*, when once they remove their dwelling out of that pariſh, they are accounted as no longer members of that Church; ſo that they come over to us as members of no particular Church at all, either in old England or in new; and ſo they are under the power of no Church, either there or here; how then can we diſpenſe an act of power to them, over whom we have no power at all, either commended to us by themſelves, or by the Churches from whence they came? Would it be thought reaſonable, in caſe that any of our Countrymen coming over to us, ſhould fall into drunkenneſſe, or whoredom, or other ſcandalous crimes, if the Church where he ſojourneth amongſt, ſhould proceed to excommunicate him for the ſame? were it not an act, *Coram non judice*? might he not demand juſtly, by what authority we caſt him out of our Communion, who was never yet entred into our Communion? This may therefore yeeld us a juſt defence.

They over whom we have no power to cenſure (in any caſe by Excommunication) to them wee have no power to diſpenſe the Communion; but ſo it is, we have no power to cenſure any of our Congregation (though never ſo ſcandalous) by excommunicating, unleſſe they firſt commend themſelves to our fellowſhip.

Therefore neither have we power till then to receive them into our communion.

2. A ſecond ground of their practiſe we take from the nature of the Sacraments, which though they be ſeales of the righteouſneſſe of faith, (*Rom.* 4. 11.) yet not to all the faithfull, or ſuch, but as they are confederate & joyned together in ſome particular viſible Church. None may ordinarily diſpenſe a Sacrament of the new Teſtament, but a Miniſter of a viſible Church, nor may he diſpenſe it to any, but to the members of a viſible Church: In the old Teſtament, none were partakers, either of the Paſſeover, or of Circumciſion, unleſſe they were either Iſraelites borne, or Proſelytes to the

Church

Church of Iſrael. *Iob* and his three friends, and *Elihu* with them, though all of them righteous by faith, and all of the ſtock and kinred of *Abraham*, yet we read of none of them to be circumciſed: nor is it credible they were: for had they been Circumciſed, they would not have kept ſo deep ſilence of it throughout all their conference with *Iob*, as they doe; eſpecially having ſo often occaſion to urge the polution of nature from the birth: whereof Circumciſion had been a moſt pertinent and pregnant evidence to convince the ſame. And wherefore were they not all circumciſed, being all of them righteous by faith, but onely becauſe they had not opportunity to joyne themſelves to the houſe of Iſrael, to whom onely the Church, and the Covenant of grace, unto them and their ſeed, and the ſeals of the Covenant were granted?

Object. If it be objected, that all that were circumciſed amongſt the people of Iſrael, might come and keep the Paſſeover amongſt them: but we here withhold the Lords Supper from them that are baptized.

Anſw. Our anſwer is, they that were circumciſed amongſt the Iſraelites, might rightly keep the Paſſeover amongſt them, becauſe the whole Nation of Iſrael made but one Church, and the Officers or Miniſters of any one Synagogue (the Prieſts and Levites) were Miniſters in common to the whole houſe of Iſrael. In proportion whereunto they that are baptized in any particular Church, may in like ſort require the Lords Supper in the ſame particular Church where they are baptized, if there be no other impediment in regard of their unfitneſſe to examine themſelves, which is a thing requiſite to the receiving of the Lords Supper, more then was required to the receiving of the Paſſeover. But now becauſe the Churches of the new Teſtament are of another conſtitution, none of them national, as the Church of Iſrael was, but all of them congregational, Baptiſm in one Church doth not give a man right to the Lords Supper in another, unleſſe the Officers of one Church were the Officers of all, (as in Iſrael they were) or unleſſe that one Church and the Officers thereof did recommend their right and power to another.

3. A third ground of our practiſe in this point is taken from the caſe of publick offence, which we conceive ought to be removed from all ſuch as are to partake together at the Lords Table, ſo we deal with the members of our owne Church, and ſo we deal with the

members

members of neighbour Churches in this Countrey: None of them are received unto the Lords Table with us, whileſt they lie under the guilt of any publick ſcandal before the face of the Church: For it is our Saviours direction, that *if a man bring his gift to the Altar, and there remembers that his brother hath ought againſt him, he ſhould there leave his gift, and go firſt to be reconciled to his brother, and then come and offer his gift*, Mat. 5. 23, 24. If this be a rule for a *mans own private direction*, in caſe of private offences, it will be a rule alſo for a whole Church to direct an offending brother to do the like in caſe of a *publick offence*: We do therefore direct both the brethren of our owne Church, and of any other Church in this Countrey, that if they preſent themſelves to communion with us at the Lords Table, they ſhould firſt remove ſuch publick offence, as either themſelves, or the Church from whence they come, do lie under, before the Lord and us; that according to the figure in the Law of the Paſſeover, no leaven muſt be found amongſt us when we come to ſit down at the Lords Table together.

Now though we rather chooſe to *cover in ſilence*, and to *mourne in ſecret*, for any corruptions found in *other Churches*, eſpecially in theſe ſo deare and neare unto us, as the Churches of *England* be: yet in this caſe, *faithfulneſſe* to God and them, and the neceſſary *defence* of our owne due *proceedings* here, conſtraineth us to confeſſe ſundry publick offences, under which our *Engliſh pariſh Churches* lie, and wherein our ſelves alſo were defiled, whileſt we lived in them, and our Countrymen are defiled that come over to us from them.

1. It is a publick offence, that they come over not as members of *any particular viſible Church*, (for they leave that relation where they left their habitation) but of a *Nationall Church*, whereof Chriſt hath given us no patterne in the new Teſtament: and in which he hath appointed no *National Churches*, nor any *National worſhip* to be performed by them.

2: It is a publick offence, that though they were *baptized* in ſome pariſh Church in *England*, upon ſome Covenant, or ſtipulation of their parents, or of ſome in their ſteed, whom they call *godfathers*, which alſo was without warrant, yet generally they have *come to the Lords Table without any publick profeſſion of their own faith, or repentance, or promiſe of performances of thoſe Chriſtian duties, which their*

parents,

parents, or others in their ſteed, made for them; which is an offence, not onely contrary to the order of their owne Church, expreſſed in the *Rubrick* before the *Common Catechiſme*, but alſo contrary to the word of God, which receiveth none to the fellowſhip of the ſeals of the Covenant, but ſuch as *profeſſe* their *taking hold of the Covenant*, as hath been ſhewed before.

3. It is a publick offence, that in their pariſh Communion, (which not *communion of ſpirit*, but *co-habitation* begetteth) they partake with all *ignorant* and *ſcandalous* perſons, not excluding drunkards, whoremongers, prophane ſwearers, covetous worldlings, Atheiſts, Papiſts, and the like; whereby it cometh to paſſe, that not a *little leaven*, but a *great maſſe of leaven* hath deeply leavened the whole lump.

4. It is a publike offence, that they have worſhipped God according to the precepts and inventions of men, both in preſcript formes of Liturgie, and Letanies, and in ſuch ceremonies, as which though they be not ordained of God, yet are publickly enjoyned, as neither dark, nor dull, but apt to ſtir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of duty to God by ſome notable and ſpecial ſignification, by which he may be edified.

5. It is a publick offence, that they have yeelded voluntary ſubjection and obedience to *ſuch a forme of government* in the Church, as the Lord Ieſus hath not appointed in his Word, and have *approved* the ſame, whether by *ſubſcription*, or by *oath of Canonical obedience*, or by *conformity* to their uſurpations and *injunctions*.

Theſe, or ſuch like publick offences, as we have *bewailed in our ſelves*, (ſo far as wee had any fellowſhip with them) ſo wee have thought it needfull, that our brethren alſo who came over to us, ſhould profeſſe their repentance of the ſame, at leaſt in a poſitive acknowledgement, of the contrary ſincere waies of the Goſpel, before they be received to Communion with us.

Sect. VI.

IF theſe grounds may ſuffice to juſtifie our *non-admittance* of all the Country-men promiſcuouſly, that come over to us *to the fellowſhip of the Lords Table*, without further ſatisfaction, the ſame alſo (or ſome of them at leaſt) may ſuffice to juſtifie our *non-admittance*

mittance of their Infants unto Baptiſme. Infants cannot claime right unto Baptiſme, but in the right of one of their parents, or both: where neither of the Parents can claime right to the Lords Supper, there their infants cannot claime right to Baptiſme. And they cannot claime right to the Lords Supper, if it be ſo that we have not lawfull libertie to adminiſter the Lords Supper to the Parents, or to one of them at leaſt, either for our want of due power over them, or through their want of Communion with the Church, (whereof the Sacrament is a ſeale) or by reaſon of ſome publike offence which they lie under; (as hath been already opened.) Surely though this third reaſon reach not Infants, yet the two former doe, and prevent as their Parents of juſt claime of the Lords Supper, ſo them of due right of Baptiſme with us. For neither have wee power over them, neither have they communion with any particular Church, being diſmiſſed from the Church where they were baptized, and recommended to none.

Againſt this ſundry things are objected, and ſuch as ſeem of much weight; as

1. That the Sacrament of Baptiſme hath been adminiſtred to ſome who were no members of any viſible Church, and therefore why not to the Children of non-members? as *Philip* baptized the Eunuch, *Act.* 8. 37, 38. and *Peter* baptized *Cornelius* and his houſhold, *Act.* 10. 47. 48. *Paul* baptized *Lydia* and her houſhold, the *Gaoler* and his houſhold, *Act.* 16. 15. 33. To which we anſwer three things.

First, The Apoſtles had an unlimited power, and might baptize beleevers profeſſing the faith, and their ſeed, whereſoever they came, but the power of Paſtors and Teachers is limitted to their own particular viſible Church, which hath called them to miniſter unto them.

Secondly, It cannot be proved that the Apoſtles or Evangeliſts baptized any but ſuch as either were members of ſome viſible Church before they preached to them, or elſe they gathered them into a viſible Church eſtate, before they baptized them. The Eunuch in *Act.* 8. was a Proſelite to the Church of Ieruſalem, for the Text ſaith, *he came up to Hieruſalem for to worship*, Act. 8. 27. Neither let any man object, that his membership at Hieruſalem would not intitle him to Baptiſme, ſeeing Baptiſme is a Sacrament of the *Chriſtian*

ſtian Church, not of the *Iewiſh* : for whatſoever member of the Iewiſh Church, as beleeved in Chriſt as the Meſſiah, and profeſſed that faith, he was capable of Baptiſme; for ſuch they were whom *Iohn* baptized, *Matth.* 3. 6. and Chriſts Diſciples, *Ioh.* 4. 2, yea all the *Iſraelites* were baptized in the Cloud and in the Sea, in the daies of *Moſes.* 1 Cor. 10. 2. As for *Lydia*, and the *Goaler*, and both their families, they lived together in the ſame Citie of Philippi, *Act.* 16. 12. where was a company alſo of other Brethren, *ver.* 4. and from the beginning of the Goſpel (which doubtleſſe was when he preached to them, *Act.* 16.) he ſpeaketh of them as a Church: *Know yee Philippians* (ſaith he) *that in the beginning of the Goſpel, no Church communicated with mee, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye onely, Phil.* 4. 15. Which evidently holdeth them forth as a Church at that time, and that *Paul* did firſt gather the brethren there into a Church, when he baptized *Lydia* and the *Gaoler*, and others there. And indeed the Commiſſion which Chriſt gave his Apoſtles, holdeth it forth, that they were by preaching to make Diſciples, before they baptized them and their children, *Matth.* 28. 19. Now a Diſciple (as the meaning of the word implieth) is a Scholar in Chriſts ſchool, and therefore when the Apoſtles were directed to make Diſciples before they did baptize them, they were not onely to convert them to the faith, but alſo to gather them as Diſciples or Scholars into a School of Chriſt; and the School of Chriſt is every particular viſible Chriſtian Church, wherein ſome are Teachers, ſome are Diſciples or Scholars, and his Diſcipline is exerciſed amongſt them. Neither is it credible, that the Apoſtles would baptize any, that is, apply to them the ſeal of the Covenant given unto the Church, before they had taught them the Covenant it ſelf, and entred them into it, in which regard wee cannot eaſily think, that when *Peter* baptized *Cornelius* and his family, he did onely perceive they had received the holy Ghoſt, and evidently profeſſed the ſame in new tongues, (*Act.* 10. 45, 46, 47.) but that he did alſo gather them into one body, directing them to the ſpirituall uſe of the newly received gifts in the Communion of Saints, and baptized them into the fellowship of the Lord Ieſus, and of one another in his Name.

Thirdly, Wee anſwer, as the Apoſtles were tranſcendent Officers of the Church, ſo they received tranſcendent power to adminiſter

miniſter their work. As the Father ſent Chriſt, ſo Chriſt ſent them, *Ioh.* 20. 21. to wit, *Cum amplitudine & plenitudine poteſtatis*, with all fulneſſe of power, ſo that any one Apoſtle received both the gifts and power of all the Officers of the Church. Any Apoſtle might do the work, not onely of an Apoſtle, but of a Prophet, of an Evangeliſt, of a Paſtor, of a Teacher, of a Deacon. They do foretell (as Prophets) *Rev.* 1. 1. things to come, *Act.* 27. 22. They travelled up and down not onely to plant Churches, but to water Churches, as Evangeliſts, *Act.* 15. 41. They as Paſtors, *feed the flock of Chriſt* with wholſome words of exhortation, *Ioh.* 21. 25. They as Teachers of the Gentiles, as *Paul* ſpeaketh of himſelf, 1 *Tim.* 2. 7. taught them in the miſteries of the Kingdom of God. They (as Elders ruled the Church, not as Lords, but as examples to the flock, and as Deacons they received the oblations of the Church, and diſtributed the ſame according to the neceſſity of the Saints. Yea, though when the Apoſtles came where Churches were planted, *Act.* 4. 35. they did put forth no act of tranſcendent authoritie, but did all with the conſent of the Church, yet in the abſence of the Churches, they might do any act which any Church and all the Officers thereof might do together. As for ought we know, they might in ſuch a caſe impoſe hands alone; ſo *Paul* might ſet apart *Timothy* to ſome ſpecial office, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. they might alone deliver unto Satan, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. they alone might baptize, in as much as the preſence, and the power, and fellowſhip of any one of them, did comprehend as much as the preſence and power and fellowſhip of the whole Church together; their acts therefore in ſuch tranſcendent caſes, are not patterns, nor preſidents for us; but according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt, wee are to move in our owne line, and to act onely as the Miniſters of Chriſt and his Church, in the *preſence and fellowſhip* of the Church.

2. It is objected again, that children of excommunicated perſons, ſuch as being caſt out, are not holden as members of the Church, have yet right unto Baptiſme, and therefore it is not well done of us to deny the Baptiſme of the children of ſuch as are not Members.

That children of Excommunicated perſons have right to Baptiſme, they prove by ſundry Arguments.

1. From the conſideration of the divers ſorts of Members;

ſo me are members not *actually*, but in the eternall Counſell of God, as *Paul* before his converſion.

2. Some are members onely in *ſhew and appearance*, as hypocrites, which are as woodden legs faſtned to the bodie.

3. Some are *lively members*, knit to Chriſt by faith, to the brethren by the ſpirit of love.

4. Some are *decayed members*, which though they belong to Gods Election, and are truly ingraffed into Chriſt Ieſus, yet for the preſent have no lively ſenſe of the power and vertue of Chriſt: theſe are like to a legge or arme to a man that hath a dead palſey, which though it remaine for a time without feeling and nouriſhment, yet being joyned to the bodie, it may be recovered by the vertue of ſome ſtrong medicine, and made whole as the other.

Of this ſort are Excommunicated perſons, for in regard of their ingraffing, they are true members, and cannot be quite cut off from the bodie of Chriſt, *Ioh.* 10. 18. And though they bee holden as cut off from the holy Communion of the faithfull by the Churches cenſure; as alſo becauſe Chriſt ratifieth in heaven, what the Church hath done on earth; and likewiſe becauſe in themſelves they want the free paſſage of the life and vertue of the ſpirit of grace, till they be touched with repentance; yet they are not wholly cut off from the ſocietie of the faithfull, becauſe the ſeed of faith remaineth in them, and that knitteth the bond of conjunction with Chriſt.

Anſw. Thoſe godly learned Divines, who doe thus argue, wee doe ſo highly eſteeme, and ſo deeply reverence in the Lord, that were the cauſe our owne, and not the Lords, we ſhould rather let it fall, then defend it, by oppoſition to the grave judgements of ſuch holy Saints. But becauſe wee may not accept perſons in the things of Chriſt, wee are forced to excuſe our ſelves from ſubmitting to their judgements in this cauſe, which yet generally in others we yeeld unto them; Our anſwer therefore is, that howſoever ſuch excommunicate perſons as are truly *faithfull* (notwithſtanding the cenſure of excommunication) becauſe the ſeed of faith remaineth in them; yet to the ſocietie of the faithfull, joyned in a particular viſible Church, they are not knit, but wholly cut off from their Communion: for it is not the *ſeed* of faith, nor *faith* it ſelfe, that knitteth a man to *this* or *that particular viſible Church*, but

but an holy *profeſsion of the faith*, and profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt in their Communion. Which profeſsion, when a faithfull man hath violated by ſome notorious ſcandalous crime, or by wilfull obſtinacie, in ſtanding out in any offence againſt the rule of the Goſpel, he is now delivered unto Satan, and therefore wholly cut off from the *Communion of the Church*, and conſequently from the *ſeales* thereof: himſelfe from the *Lords table*, his ſeed (which are his members) from *Baptiſme*: hee is not now as a dead palſey member, cut off from the bodie; *Ne pars ſincera trahatur*; the Lord Ieſus may ſtill lay hold upon him by his Spirit, when yet hee cannot in any lively manner for the time lay hold upon Chriſt; and ſo he may ſtill remaine a member of the inviſible Church of the firſt-borne, when yet hee hath neither part, nor portion, nor fellowſhip in the particular flock and viſible Church of Chriſt Ieſus, *but is as an Heathen, or a Publican.*

Now becauſe the Sacraments are not given to the inviſible Church, nor to the members thereof, *as ſuch*, but to the viſible particular Churches of Chriſt Ieſus, and to the members thereof; ſuch therefore as are cut off from their member-like Communion with the viſible Church, are cut off alſo from the ſeales of that Communion, Baptiſme and the Lords Supper. As therefore wee doe not receive an *Heathen* to the fellowſhip of the Supper, nor their ſeed to Baptiſme, ſo neither dare we receive an *Excommunicate perſon* (who is to us as an Heathen) unto the Lords Supper, nor his children to Baptiſme.

Object. It is objected againe in the behalfe of the children of Excommunicate perſons, that it is not in the power of man to cut them off from Chriſt, though they be excommunicate: the perſonall ſinne of the Parent, may not keep the bleſsing from the childe, and therefore not deprive it of the libertie of the ordinance of God.

Anſw. The ſame power of Chriſt that ratifieth the Cenſure of the Church againſt the Excommunicate parent, though it doe not cut off the childe *from Chriſt*, (no more then the Father) yet it cuts him off *from the outward fruition of the Covenant* of Chriſt with his Church, and from the *ſeales* thereof: For as Chriſt gave the childe no right unto Baptiſme, but by the Fathers right unto the Covenant, and Communion of the Church; ſo if hee taketh away

way the Fathers right from the Covenant and Communion of the Church, he taketh away the *Childrens right* alſo. The perſonall ſinne of the parent is not in this caſe a meer private or perſonall ſinne, but the ſinne of a publick perſon of his familie. For as the profeſsion of his faith at his receiving into the Church was as the profeſsion of a publick perſon, for receiving him and his children (who could make no profeſſion, but by his mouth) into the Church: So his violation of his profeſsion by a ſcandalous crime, was as a publick violation thereof, for himſelfe and his ſeed, who ſtand and fall before the Church in his name and perſon.

Object. It is yet further objected, We muſt alwayes put a difference between perſons Excommunicate, which do not make ſeparation from the Church, (though they be grievous offenders) and open Apoſtates (which joyne themſelves with the enemies of the Church, to the ruine and overthrow of the Goſpel,) and between Turkes and Infidels, that are forth of the Covenant, and never belonged to Chriſt.

Anſw. We willingly put a difference between the Excommunicate perſons and Apoſtates, and Turks; to wit, in ſuch things wherein they differ. Excommunicate perſons are neerer to helpe and means of converſion then Turks; for Excommunication it ſelfe is a means of ſalvation, 1 *Cor.* 5. 5. and Turkes are nearer then Apoſtates; *For better it were never to have known the way of righteouſneſſe, then after they have known it, to turne away from the holy Commandment given unto them,* 2 Pet. 21. But yet in this they all agree, they are all of them as Heathens, *Mat.* 18.17. And therefore neither the Parents to be admitted to the Lords Table, nor their children to Baptiſme.

Object. Moreover, it is ſtill further objected in behalfe of Infants, (2. *Command.*) If the *mercy of God enlarge it ſelf to thouſands,* why ſhould men queſtion whether ſuch Infants belong to the Covenant, and ſo keepe them from the Sacrament of Baptiſme, which is due to them by the right of their Anceſtors?

Anſw. 1. If the *extenſion of Gods mercie to thouſands,* bee a ſufficient ground to *extend Baptiſme* to the children of Excommunicate perſons, in the right of their Anceſtors; it may ſuffice as well to extend it to the children of *Turks* and *Infidels*, and *Apoſtates*, and ſo the difference of the one from the other (urged in the laſt Argument)

ment) will be taken away. For it is not above 66. Generations from *Noah* to *Chriſt*, as is plain in the Genealogie, *Luk.*3.23. to 38. and there have not paſſed as many more generations from Chriſts time to the Turks and Infidels of this preſent age. And then if Gods mercy to a thouſand generations may fetch in the children of Excommunicate perſons, the ſame promiſe may fetch in all Turks and Infidels at this day: we dare not therefore improve the large extenſion of Gods mercy ſo far as to give a thouſand Generations right and title to the Covenant of God with his Church, and to encourage the Miniſters of the Goſpel to ſet the ſeales of the Covenant thereunto.

The true meaning of the promiſe we take to be, That God out of his abundant grace and rich mercy, may and doth extend thoughts of redeeming and converting grace and mercy unto thouſand Generations: But he never allowed his Church any warrant to receive into their Covenant and communion the children of godly parents, who lived a thouſand years ago, much leſſe a thouſand generations. Nay rather the Text is plain, that the holineſſe of the children, dependeth upon the faith of the next immediate parents, (or one of them at leaſt) 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. to wit, ſuch faith as denominateth them Chriſtian-beleevers, in oppoſition to Pagan Infidels: and that holineſſe of the children to ſuch parents, is called Federal, which receiveth them into the Covenant, and to the ſeals of it.

Object. Laſtly, it is objected, that children born in *fornication* have right to Baptiſme, and why not then the children of excommunicate parents? The wickedneſſe of parents ought not to prejudice the children in things that pertain to their ſalvation.

Anſw. The wickedneſſe of the Parent doth not prejudice the *Election* or *Redemption*, or the *Faith of the childe*: *Iephta*, a baſtard, is yet reckoned up in the Catalogue of Beleevers, *Heb.* 11.32. But yet in the old Teſtament, a *Baſtard was not admitted to come into the Congregation of the Lord, to his tenth Generation*, Deut. 23. 2. and that could not but prejudice all the baſe-borne children of Iſrael, and that in the things which pertain to their ſalvation. And though God ſheweth greater grace to them in the daies of the Goſpel, yet greater grace cannot (by proportion of any rules of the Goſpel) be expected for them from the Church, then this, that notwithſtanding

ſtanding the ſin of their parents,they may be received into the Congregation of the Lord, and ſo unto Baptiſme, either when their parents repent and acknowledge their ſin before the Lord and his Church,or when themſelves are able to make a better profeſſion of better things in their owne perſons.

It is generally knowne that our beſt Divines do not allow the Baptiſme of Baſtards, *ſine ſponſoribus*: But whether they conſider *Sponſores*, as witneſſes, as ſome doe who fetch allowance of witneſſes from *Iſa.* 8. 2, 3, 4. or whether they conſider them as *Sureties*, the holy Scripture gives no warrant for either in ſuch a caſe. The place in *Iſaiah* giveth no foot-hold for Witneſſes in Baptiſme. The Prophet called not *Vriah* for a witneſſe of the Circumciſion of his childe; but of the conception of a man-childe yet unbegotten, and of the Prophecie of ſuch events as were to fall out during the infancie of the child: nor was it meet the Prophet ſhould honour ſo wicked a time-ſerver as *Vriah* was, to be a witneſſe of the Circumciſion of his childe; though the more prophane and idolatrous he was,the more fit and faithful a witneſſe of a miraculous prediction,to the conviction of an incredulous King and people: And as for Sureties,the Covenant is not intayled to Sureties,to ſuch as for whom they undertake,but to faithful parents, pertaing to the family of the Church, and to their ſeed. It is true indeed,there is a large promiſe to *Abraham*, ſtretching the Covenant to his ſeed, not onely to the children of his owne body,and to his proſelite ſervants, but alſo to all that were borne in his houſe,or bought with money, *Gen.* 17.12, 13.which happily may grant ſo much libertie to a Chriſtian *Sponſor*, that if a ſtranger or wicked man ſhould give him his child from his infancy to be brought up as his own, it may be baptized as his own: But that is the utmoſt bounds of liberty in this caſe. And very doubtful it is, whether the promiſe pertain onely to the children of Proſelites, either ſtrangers or borne in the houſe. But we know not any ground at all to allow a faithful man liberty to entitle another mans childe to Baptiſme, onely upon a pretence of his owne promiſe to have an eie to his education, unleſſe the child be either born in his houſe,or reſigned to him to be brought up as his owne.

CHAP.

Chap. V.

Touching the diſpenſation of the Cenſures of the Church.

Sect. I.

WEE proceed not to Cenſure, but in caſe of *knowne offence*, and ſuch offence as *cannot be healed without Cenſure*. Two ſorts of offences there be, ſome *private* between Brother and Brother; ſome *publik* and *notorious*, being knowne to the *whole Church*; or at leaſt to *many*. And of them, ſome are *more groſſe* and hainous, ſome *leſſe*.

If the offence be private between Brother and Brother, the Brother offended is to follow the Rule of Chriſt, *Mat.* 18. 15. 16, 17. *That is, firſt to goe and tell him of his fault*, or (as the word ſignifieth) *Convince him of his fault, and to admoniſh him of it privately*; So that the plaiſter may be no broader then the ſoare; private admonition is moſt ſutable to a private fault, and expreſſeth both the wiſdome and love of the Brother, who in ſo doing both healeth and covereth the offence at once: If the offender take the admonition in good part, (as taking part with the admonition againſt his owne ſinne) the Brother hath *wonne and gained him both to God and himſelfe*: to *God* by *repentance*; to *himſelfe* by this *experiment of his brotherly love*: But if the offender heare not his Brother, but takes part with his ſinne againſt the admonition, he then taketh one or two more with him, (ſuch as in wiſdome he thinketh to be moſt fit to prevaile with him) that ſo by the *mouth of two or three, his word of admonition may be eſtabliſhed*; or if the offender heare them not, his *word of accuſation to the Church may be eſtabliſhed*: And they coming to the offender and acquaint him with the cauſe of their coming to bring him to the ſight of his ſinne, which they underſtand is committed by him; they firſt call upon the name of Chriſt to be preſent with them in this dutie according to his promiſe, *Mat.* 18. 19, 20. where he hath ſaid he will be preſent with *any two or three that are met together in his name*, to aske of him, (for it is upon this occaſion, and this chiefly upon which the promiſe is made.)

made.) And the brother offended laieth open the offence before them, and declareth how ill the labour of his love was accepted before, and deſireth their helpe to aſſiſt him in the conviction of the offender. If they can prevaile with him to acknowledge his offence, and to be humbled for it, the ſoule of the offender is healed, thanks are given to God, and mutuall love renewed and increaſed amongſt themſelves. But if the offender deny the fact, and there is none to prove it but the Brother that brought them, they can proceed no farther, becauſe the teſtimony of *one againſt one, will not ſtand in Judgement*, Deut. 19. 15. If he acknowledge the fact, but doe not acknowledge the ſinfulneſſe of it, but ſtand ſtifly to juſtifie it, then the Brother firſt offended telleth the Church of it, to wit, in Gods way. He telleth the *Elders*, who are the mouth of the Church, that by them it may be preſented before the Church, and the cauſe heard and examined, and judged by them. Then one of the *Elders*, either by himſelfe, or calling forth the Brother offended, declareth the offence given to him by ſuch a Brother, and what courſe he tooke with him (according to the Rule of Chriſt) to heale his Brother. Firſt, by private admonition, but ſo he prevailed not to bring him to a ſight and ſenſe of his ſinne; then how he tooke a Brother or two more to aſſiſt him in the worke, but neither ſo could he or they prevaile with him; which they being preſent, doe openly teſtifie before the Lord and his Church: And *ſo by the mouth of two or three, the word of his accuſation is eſtabliſhed* before the Church.

The Church being thus informed of the eſtate and carriage of the offence, the *Elders* doe labour in publick with the offender to convince him, both of his ſinne and impenitencie under it, notwithſtanding all the faithfulneſſe, and love of his Brethren, in ſeeking to heale his ſpirit in private. It is free alſo for any of the Brethren (leave and libertie being firſt deſired and obtained of the *Elders*) to help forward the conviction by any *words of wiſdome* and zeale which God ſhall put into their mouths; wherein if the convictions and perſwaſions of the Church doe prevaile to any kindly humiliation of the offender in the acknowledgement of his ſinne before the Lord and his Church; the *offender is gained*, the *ſinne is ſubdued*, others *diſcouraged from the like offence*, and the *Church is ſatisfied*.

But

But if on the contrary the offender ſtand out in defence of his ſin, as well *againſt the whole Church*, as he did before, *againſt the Brethren*, who dealt with him in private, the Church then entereth into conſideration of the *Nature* and *Quality* of the offence, whether it be groſſe and hainous, ſuch as is condemned by the *light of nature*, (like thoſe caſt out by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11.) or whether it be ſuch as (through ſome *miſt of ignorance*, or *ſtrength of preſent paſſion*) he doth not clearly diſcerne the ſinfulneſſe of it: if it be of the former ſort, they proceed then to excommunication, both in reſpect of the *nature of the crime* (whereof more hereafter) as alſo in reſpect of his *contumacy* to the Church. If it be of the latter ſort, the Church proceedeth not forthwith to excommunication of the offender, but after once or twice admonition; For in this caſe it is with the *offender* as with an *Heretike*, who may erre at firſt, and ſtand in his error, for want of clear light, and is therefore *once and again* (according to the rule of the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 3. 10.) *to be admoniſhed before he be rejected:* when therefore an admonition is judged ſeaſonable, one of the *Elders*, with the conſent of the whole Church, doth *recollect the offence*, and all *the arguments of weight, which have been publikely or privately uſed to convince the offender of his ſinne*, and diſcovereth to him alſo, that *invalidity and ſhallowneſſe of all his anſwers and evaſions*; and thereupon doth *ſolemnly, in the name of the Lord, admoniſh and charge him to ſee the danger of ſuch a ſin, and diſtemper of his ſoule, in maintaining of it*; that ſo (if it be the will of God) he may be recovered out of the ſnare of the Tempter. Whilſt the Brother is thus *caſt, and lyeth under the cenſure of admonition*, he ſtandeth in the judgement of the whole Church, as *a convinced publike offender*; and therefore, till he be *reconciled* to the Church by the penitent and publique accknowledgement of his ſin before them, *hee doth abſtaine from the Lords Table*; according to the direction of our Saviour, who *would not have an offender preſent himſelf nor his gift before the altar, whileſt the guilt of the offence of his brother lay upon him*, Mat. 5. 23, 24. or, as the *Prieſts in the Law did forbeare to eate of the holy bread, whileſt they lay in uncleanneſſe*, Lev. 22. 3. 4. or, as one who *lying in his uncleanneſſe, did rather pollute the holy Ordinance of God by partaking of it, then receive any holineſſe from it*, Hag. 2. 12, 13.

The offender then by this publique admonition being debarred

of his wonted fellowſhip in the Lords Table, and withall being ſolicited, and urged by his brethren and friends to conſider his great diſtemper of ſpirit, in ſtanding out ſo long in that which is evill; If hereupon (by the grace of Chriſt) he come to himſelfe, and ſee his ſin, and deſire to reconcile himſelfe to the Lord, and his brethren, he then acquainting one of the Elders with his deſire, is called forth in the face of the Church, to make publike confeſſion of his ſin, and to judge himſelfe for it; wherein, if the Lord help him to hold forth an ingenuous and humble loathing of his ſin and of himſelfe for it; they bleſſe God for his bleſſing upon his ordinance, and readily receive him into wonted favour, and brotherly fellowſhip with them, in all the liberties of Gods houſe; but if on the contrary the ſpirit of the brother grow more & more hardened in his ſin, and ſtand out againſt all means (publike and private) of his reformation, the Church having waited a convenient time, and yet finding their brother wax worſe and worſe, (as is commonly ſeen in ſuch caſes, wherein men are not bumbled under ſuch means) then, according to the rule of Chriſt, *Matth.* 18. 17. one of the Elders propounding the caſe, firſt to the whole Church, and they giving their conſents (as before for his admiſſion, ſo now for his expulſion) hee ſetteth his ſin againe in order before him, with all the circumſtances and aggravations of it, eſpecially how hee hath taken in vaine, and made unprofitable all other means for his recovery; and therefore now, in the name, and with the power of the Lord Jeſus, and with the conſent of the whole Church, he pronounceth him cut off from the communion of the Church, and delivereth him unto Satan, as an Heathen, or a Publican, for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that his ſoule may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus; and all this according to the direction of the Holy Ghoſt, *Matth.* 18. 17. 2 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5.

Sect. II.

And thus the Church proceedeth, in caſe the offence be private at firſt, and leſſe ſcandalous; but if the offence be publike, and hainous and groſly ſcandalous, ſuch as is condemned even amongſt the Heathens, by the light of nature; as thoſe mentioned by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. *Fornication, Adultery, Inceſt, Murther,*

Murther, *Raying*, *Extortion*, and the like ; or ſuch as are generally accounted damnable and deteſtable amongſt Chriſtians, as *Idolatry*, *Blaſphemy*, *Prophaneneſſe*, &c. Wee take our ſelves bound to proceed more roundly againſt ſuch ; for in ſuch caſes the Apoſtle doth not direct us to ſuch *graduall proceedings by private admonitions*, but if any Brother (ſaith he) be a *fornicator*, or *covetous*, or an *Idolater*, or a *railer*, or a *drunkard*, or an *extortioner*, *with ſuch a one no not to eat* : For it doth not ſtand with the glory of God, or honour of his Church to accept an acknowledgement of ſuch groſſe and ſcandalous crimes without further cenſure ; but it becometh the Church, (being a communion of Saints) rather to free themſelves from the guilt and fellowſhip of ſuch notorious wickedneſſe, by expreſſion of their zeal and juſt indignation againſt ſuch ſins by caſting out the committers thereof from fellowſhip amongſt them ; for though the blood of Chriſt, and the repentance of an offender doe remove any offence, though never ſo hainous in the ſight of God and man, yet God being jealous of his own glory, and of the honour of his Church, is not wont ordinarily to grant repentance unto ſuch notorious ſinners, untill the cenſure of the Church have paſſed upon them.

Whileſt the offender lyeth under the cenſure of excommunication, though he be excluded from the communion of the Church, and ſo from the Lords Table, and from all other liberties of Church-fellowſhip (as voting in elections, admiſſion of members, cenſures, &c.) yet wee doe not debar him from *entrance into the aſſembly* of the Church in *time of preaching the Word*, or *Prayer*, or ſuch other worſhip of God, as is not *peculiar to the Church* ; for this liberty wee doe not forbid to Heathens and Indians ; and perſons excommunicate are but as *Heathens*, in reſpect of worſhip, although *worſe then Heathens* (even as *Publicans*) in reſpect of familiar private communion ; for though wee might eate with an *Heathen*, (1 *Cor.* 10. 27.) yet with a *Publican* the *Jews* would not eate, *Mat.* 9. 11. no more may we with *excommunicate perſons*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. But we doe not read that an *Heathen* was forbidden to heare the Word in the *Synagogues*, though they were not permitted to enter into the *Temple* (which was to them of a *Sacramentall* nature) *Acts* 21. 28, 29. nor might they enter as *members* into the *Congregation*, Deut. 13. 3. to 8. But ſuppoſe *Heathens* were forbidden to heare the Word,

Word, even in the *Synagogues*, yet ſeeing that wall of partition between *Jews* and *Heathens* is now broken down, as in other reſpects, ſo in this, that it is not now unlawfull for an *Infidell* or *Heathen* to come into the aſſembly of the Church (1 *Cor.* 14 23, 24, 25.) As therefore we doe not deny the like liberty, either to *Indians* or *Negars*; ſo not to excommunicate perſons: Moreover, this further compaſſion and ſuccour wee afford to an excommunicate perſon, that though we have caſt him out of our liberties and priviledges peculiar to Church-fellowſhip, yet wee have not caſt him out alſo of our hearts, nor out of our prayers, nor out of our care to recover ſuch a loſt ſheep into Chriſts fold againe; and therefore ſtill, though we forbeare all familiar fellowſhip with him, and countenance towards him, that he may be aſhamed; yet we account him not as an *enemy*, but ſtill take opportunity to admoniſh him as a *Brother*, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 14, 15. And if we by the bleſſing of God and Chriſt upon the cenſure, or by the rebukes of many miniſtred unto him, that the ſoule of the excommunicate perſon be humbled (as it was the caſe of the *inceſtuous Corinthian* 2 Cor. 2. 6.) the Elders diſcovering the ſame, doe call him forth before the Church, where he giving glory to God, and confeſſing his ſin, and the juſtice of God againſt him, and holding forth a repenting frame of ſpirit, to the ſatisfaction of the Church, they doe with common conſent forgive him and comfort him, and confirme their love to him, by receiving him againe into communion with the Church, and into all the liberties of Gods Houſe, as before.

Sect. III.

IN all theſe tranſactions of Church proceedings, when we ſay we doe this or that with *common conſent*, our meaning is, we doe not carry on matters, either by the *over-ruling power of the Presbytery*, or by the conſent of the *major part* of the Church, but by the generall and joynt conſent of all the members of the Church; for we read in the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, the Primitive Church (which is a pattern for ſucceeding ages) carried all their adminiſtrations, ὁμοθυμαδὸν, that is, with one accord, *Acts* 2. 46. as becometh the Church of God; which ought to be of *one heart*, and *one ſoule*, of *one mind*, and *one judgement*, and all to *ſpeak the ſame thing*, Act. 4. 32. 1 *Cor.*

32. 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Phil.* 2. 2, 3. But if it ſo fall out, that any difference doe ariſe, (as ſometime there doth, through the remaining darkneſſe of our mindes, ſeeing wee all know but in part) then ſuch as doe diſſent from their Brethren, are required to propound the grounds of their diſſent; which if they be weighty, and held forth from the light of the Word, all the reſt doe ſubmit, and yeeld thereunto, not as to the voyce of their Brethren only, but as to the voyce of Chriſt; whoſe voyce alone muſt rule in the Church, and all the ſheep of Chriſt will heare it; and all the upright in heart will follow it; thus *Paphnutius* is ſaid to turne about the whole generall Councell of *Nice*, in the point of *Miniſters marriage*. But if the grounds of ſuch as doe diſſent, doe upon due conſideration appeare to have little or no weight in them, the officers of the Church, or ſome other of the Brethren, doe declare unto them the invalidity thereof: If they be ſatisfied, the matter in hand doth then proceed with the common conſent of all; if they be not ſatisfied yet, it is either through *want of light*, (and ſo through weakneſſe of judgement) or through *ſtrength of pride*, and ſo through *ſtiffneſſe* of will. If the *former* be the let, they take further pains, lovingly to inform them, and patiently beare with them, till matters be further cleared; ſo that at length, they come either to conſent, to goe along with their Brethren, or at leaſt to be content to refer the matter to the judgements of their Brethren; and for their part to ſit ſtill, and to make no further dealings with the Churches proceedings; but if through partiality or prejudice, their diſſent doe appeare to ſpring from *ſtiffneſſe of will*, or from a ſpirit of contradiction, (which yet falleth out very rarely) in ſo much, that they will not be brought (by loving and brotherly information) to give way to the better judgements of their Brethren, the Church doth proceed with common conſent to admoniſh them of their pride, and ſelf-willedneſſe, and ſo leave them *under the cenſure of admonition*; whereby the liberty of their voyce is taken from them, till they have removed this offence from the ſpirits of their Brethren; but if it doe appeare that the diſſent, whether of one or more Brethren, doe ariſe from ſuch darkneſſe and intricacie of the matter in hand, as that the officers and members of the Church doe finde themſelves either unable to cleare the matter fully, or at leaſt unfit, in regard of ſome prejudice which may be conceived againſt them, (which ſometimes doth fall

fall out, though very ſeldome) in ſuch a caſe, when the matter is weightie, and the doubt great on both ſides, then (with common conſent) wee call in for light from other *Churches*; and intreat them to ſend over to us ſuch of their Elders, or Brethren, as may be fit to judge in ſuch a cauſe; upon their coming, the Church meeting together in the Name of Chriſt, the whole cauſe, and all the proceedings in it, are laid open to them; who by the help of Chriſt, pondering and ſtudying all things according to the rule of the Word, the truth is cleared, a right way of peace and concord diſcovered and adviſed, and the ſpirits of the Brethren on all parts comfortably ſatisfied.

Sect. IV.

IN theſe tranſactions wee know not what might be ſubject to exception, or controverſie; but onely that we allow to the people ſo much power in the cenſures of the Church, both in binding an offender to admonition and excommunication, and in looſing of penitents from the ſame. But the Reaſons that prevaile with us to take this courſe, ſeem to us to have evident ground from Scripture-light; and therefore may excuſe us from following the pattern of ſuch Churches as rather conſult with humane wiſdome then divine inſtitution in this caſe.

Our firſt Reaſon is taken from the royall rule of Love and Wiſdome, in healing offences, given by our Saviour, *Matth.* 18. 17. where he directeth a Brother offended, for the healing of the ſpirit of an offender, finally to referre the matter to the Church. *Tell* (ſaith he) *the Church.* Now we cannot finde throughout the new Teſtament, that ever the word *Church* is taken any otherwiſe then for the *Society and Congregation* of the faithfull; unleſſe it be once, where it is taken for a *civill Aſſembly*, Act. 19. 41. But never for one *Biſhop*, or *Counſellor*, or *Archdeacon*; for neither doth the Scripture acknowledge any of theſe offices in the Church at all, (as hath been ſhewed above) taking a *Biſhop*, as now they ſtand; nor can the *Church*, which is a word of *multitude*, hold forth a *Biſhop* or his *Commiſſary*; who is but one perſon: For, though one perſon may repreſent a whole Church when he is ſent forth in the Churches name, with inſtructions from the Church; yet ſuch is not the caſe here:

here: The Bishop cometh in his own name, and the Commissary in the Bishops name, but neither of them in the Churches name, nor with instructions from the Church: but rather with destructions, or at least with disturbances to the Church. Neither is the word Church taken throughout the new Testament for an assembly of Presbyters, the Consistorie is a word unheard of there. Nor are any complaints directed thither, unlesse it be to prepare them for the hearing and judgement of the Church; As all the Elders are said to be assembled in the house of *Iames*, to prepare and instruct *Paul* for the carriage of his matter before the Church. Nor any censures of the Church committed to the Presbyters alone, to be administred by them; though they be to be administred by them in the presence, and with the consent of the Church. And therefore when the Angels of the Churches in Asia are blamed for neglect of proceeding against offenders, whether *Balaam*, or *Iezabel*, or the *Nicholaitans*) the charge is given not to the Angels of the Churches onely, but to the Churches also themselves: *Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*, Rev. 2. 17. 29. And though the word *Congregation*, which is all one with *Church*, be sometimes put in the old Testament for *Elders or Iudges of the Congregation*; yet

1. It is far more frequently put for the Elders and bodie of the people met together, as he that observeth the severall places shall find it.

2. When it is put for the Elders and Iudges of the Congregation, as *Numb.* 35. 12. 24, 25. it is never understood of them sitting in a *Consistory by themselves* apart from the people, but in the *presence of the publick Assembly of the people*, who also had libertie in such cases to rescue an innocent from unjust punishment. 1 *Sam.* 14. 45.

Object. In *Mat.* 18. 17. when Christ directeth the Brother offended to tell the Church, he speaketh of such a Church to whom we may *orderly*, and *ordinarily* complaine: now this we cannot do to the whole multitude,

Answ. We willingly grant, it will be *orderly* to tell any offence to the *Elders of the Church*, before it be presented to the multitude of the Church, both because they are the mouthes and guides of the Church: and also meet it is all things be prepared by them for the Churches cognizance, that so the Church be not cumbered, (as sometimes it might) with unnecessary and frivolous agitations.

But though the Elders in ſuch a caſe have power to direct and perſwade what were beſt to be done, yet not power to judge or determine publike Caſes, without the conſent of the Church; unleſſe the Brother offended be ſatisfied in their advice.

Anſw. 2. When a whole multitude is aſſembled in a bodie, any offence may be orderlie and ordinarilie told unto them, by a complainant; eſpecially in caſe any Officer amongſt them shall call him forth to tell his complaint: As the Levite orderly told his complaint to the *whole multitude of the Congregation of Iſrael aſſembled at Miſpah*, Iudg. 20. 3, 4, *&c.*

Object. 2. The Church Chriſt directeth unto, he preſuppoſeth to be the ordinarie Executioners of all diſcipline and cenſures, which the multitude is not: And the reaſon ratifying the cenſure of the Church, doth shew the number of them to be ſmall, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Where two or three*, &c.

Anſw. The multitude of the Church doth ordinarily execute all Diſcipline and Cenſures by the Presbyters, and the Presbyters by their conſent. The promiſe made to two or three (*ver.* 20.) reſpecteth not the Iudges of the cauſe when it is brought to the Church, but the two or three Brethren who dealt in the cauſe before it came to the Church: As in like ſort, the promiſe of *binding in heaven what the Church bindeth in earth*, (ver. 19.) pertaineth to the ratifying of the Cenſure of the whole Church, mentioned in the verſe before, to wit, in *verſ.* 17.

A ſecond Reaſon why we allow ſuch power to the people in Church-cenſures, is taken from the practice of the Church of *Corinth*, in the caſe of the *inceſtuous perſon*, and that according to the Apoſtles direction; For in the 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5. he directeth the whole Church of *Corinth*, (to whom he writeth) *That they in the name of the Lord Ieſus, when* (ſaith he) *ye are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the power of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, to deliver ſuch a one unto Satan.* Where *Paul* saying in the verſe foregoing, that *he had judged already that ſo it ſhould be done*, doth not argue that now the Church was at hand, he took the power of judging the cauſe wholy unto himſelf, and the publication and declaration of it onely in the Church, *but that he had ſeen already evident cauſe, to judge the party worthy to be caſt out*: but directed them to do it with all the power that is requiſite to that action:

As

As 1. In the name of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, in whom the principall power of all Church-cenſures reſteth.

2. When *they* (that is, the whole Church) are gathered together: not the *Biſhops*, nor the *Presbyters* alone.

3. And Pauls ſpirit with them, to wit, ſo much of Apoſtolicall Authoritie being committed to the Church, and preſent with it in ſuch caſes.

4. He ſpeaketh of the power of the Lord Ieſus with them in this action, which holdeth forth their Authoritie.

5. When the Excommunicate perſon was humbled under this Cenſure, *Paul* beſeecheth them to forgive him, to comfort him, to confirme their love unto him, 2 *Cor.* 2.7,8. Now they who have power of forgiving an offender, have power alſo of binding him under wrath: *Ejuſdem poteſtatis, &c. ligare, &c. & ſolvere.*

Object. 1. All this argueth no more, but that ſome in the Church had this power, to wit, the Presbyterie of the Church, but not the whole body of the people.

Anſw. 1. There is no word in the Text that attributeth any power to the Presbytery apart, or ſingularly above the reſt: But as the reproofe *is* directed to them all, for not mourning and taking the offence to heart, that the offender might be taken away from amongſt them, (verſ. 1. 2.) ſo is Commandement directed to them all, when they are gathered together, to proceed unto the caſting of him out: In like ſort, in the end of the Chapter, he exhorteth them all againe, *Put away therefore* (ſaith he) *from amongſt you that wicked perſon*, verſ. 13, and that by a judiciall power, (to wit, as under Chriſt) *doe not yee judge them that are within*, verſ. 12. And leſt this Iudgement ſhould be reſtrained to the Presbyters onely, he magnifieth the judgements of the Saints, taking occaſion from hence to ſtretch their Iudicature, in ſome caſes, even to civill matters alſo; *Know yee not* (ſaith hee) *that the Saints ſhall judge the world?* yea the Angels, 1 *Cor.* 6.2,3. And thereupon he incourageth them to betruſt the deciding of any civil cauſe depending betweene Brethren, to the Iudicature of the meaneſt Brother in the Church, (ver. 4. rather then to fly ſuddenly unto Civill Magiſtrates, eſpecially amongſt the Heathen.

Object. 2. But if the power of Iudicature be committed to the whole Church, together with the Presbytery, then all the multitude

ſhall bee made Governours, and who then ſhall bee governed?

Anſw. The multitude of Brethren are governed by the Elders, ſo long as they rule aright, to wit, whileſt they hold forth the Word and voice of Chriſt, which the ſheep of Chriſt are wont to heare, *Ioh.* 10.4. But in caſe the officers doe erre, and commit offence, they ſhall be governed by the whole bodie of the Brethren; though otherwiſe the Brethren are bound to obey and ſubmit to them in the Lord, *Heb.* 13.17.

Object. 3. A democraticall government might do well in *Athens*, a citie fruitfull of pregnant wits, but will ſoone degenerate to an Anarchie (a popular tumult) amongſt rude common people.

Anſw. 1. It is unworthy the ſpirit of ſo godly learned a man as maketh this objection to preferre *Athens* before *Ieruſalem*, *pregnant wits* before *ſanctified hearts*.

Anſw. 2. Though the government were democraticall (as it is not) yet there is no tumultuous diſorder, where not the will of each man beareth the ſway, but the voice of Chriſt alone is heard, who is the Head and wiſe Monarch of the Church.

Object. If it be ſaid, tumult, and diſturbance, and confuſion cannot be avoided where the multitude have all of them, not only leave, but power to ſpeak, and one will be readie to take the word out of the others mouth, and one of them to thwart and contradict one another; and will not this make the Church of Chriſt a confluence of Cyclops?

Anſw. All ſuch diſorder is eaſily and timely prevented by the Elders, who have power from Chriſt to reſtraine any mans ſpeech, whileſt another is ſpeaking; and to cut off any mans ſpeech that groweth either impertinent or intemperate: the Elders having received in ſpeciall manner the power of the keys, they have power to open and ſhut the doores of ſpeech and ſilence, in which reſpect the government of the Church is not meerly democraticall, but (as the beſt governments be) of a mixt temper; in reſpect of Chriſt (whoſe voice only muſt be heard, and his rule kept) it is a *Monarchy*; in reſpect of the peoples power in chooſing officers, and joynt power with the officers in admitting members, in cenſuring offenders, it is a Democracie; in reſpect of the officers inſtruction and reproof of the people in the publick miniſterie, and in ordering of all things in the Aſſembly, it is an Ariſtocracy; what is found

good,

good in any civill government, is in Church-government; and what is found evill is by the wiſdome of Chriſt ſafely avoided and prevented.

But that we may more diſtinctly declare our ſelves wherein lyeth the difference of their mutuall authoritie, both of the Church over the Elders, and the Elders over the Church, wee conceive the Church exerciſeth ſeverall acts of authoritie over their Elders, to wit, in three caſes:

1. In calling and electing them to office, and in ordaining them alſo thereunto in defect of the Presbyterie.

2. In ſending them forth upon publicke ſervice of Chriſt, as the whole Church at Ieruſalem ſent forth choſen Miniſters with letters of inſtruction to Antioch, and other Churches, *Acts* 15. 22. Now the Ambaſſador is not greater then he that ſent him, but uſually inferiour, *Ioh.* 13. 16.

3. In caſe of offence given by any Elder, or by the whole Elderſhip together, the Church hath authoritie to require ſatisfaction of them, and if they doe not give due ſatisfaction, to proceed to cenſure according to the qualitie of the offence. For wee ſee when ſome of the Church of Ieruſalem tooke offence againſt *Peter*, for communicating with the Gentiles, and contended with him about it; *Peter* condeſcending to give ample and due account of his actions to the ſatisfaction of them all, *Acts* 11. 2. to 8.

If admonition, and (in ſome caſes) excommunication be ordinances of God ſanctified for the healing of the ſoules of Gods people gone aſtray; it were a ſacrilegious injury to the Elders, to deprive them of the benefit of ſuch wholeſome medicines, when the eſtate of their ſoules ſhould come to ſtand in need thereof: and it being a ruled caſe, *Cujus eſt inſtituere ejus eſt deſtituere*; If *Plebs obſequens præceptis Dominicis & ipſa* (as *Cyprian* ſaith, *lib.* 1. *Ep.* 4.) *maximè poteſtatem habet dignos Sacerdotes eligendi*, then, as hee ſaith there alſo, *poteſtatem etiam habet Sacerdotes indignos recuſandi, & abdicandi.*

On the other ſide, the Elders have rule over the Church, and do expreſſe it in ſundry acts of authoritie: as,

1. In calling the Church together upon any weightie occaſion, *Acts* 6. 2.

2. In opening the doors of ſpeech and ſilence to any of the Aſſembly,

bly, *Acts* 13.15. unleſſe it be where the Elders themſelves lie under offence, or ſuſpition of offence; and the offended parties may begin with them, *Acts* 11.2. yet with due reverence obſerved, as to their yeers, ſo to their place, 1 *Tim.* 5.1.

3. In *preaching the Word*, the Elders have power to *teach* and *exhort*, to *charge*, *command*, to *reprove*, and *rebuke*, *with all authoritie*, 1 Tim. 5.7. and 6.17. 2 Theſ. 3.6. Tit. 2.15.

4. In *diſpenſing all the cenſures of the Church* (unleſſe it be in their own cauſe:) for though they take the *conſent of the Church*, in diſpenſing a cenſure, yet they ſet it on with great authoritie, in the *Name of the Lord*; yea, it is no ſmall power they put forth in *directing the Church what cenſure is due*, according to the Word; as in our native countrey, though the Iudge diſpence no ſentence but according to the *verdict of the Iury*, yet his authoritie is great, both in directing the Iury to give in their verdict, according to the law, and in pronouncing ſentence with power and terror according to the law, and their verdict. The like doe the Elders, in diſpenſing Church-cenſures.

5. The Elders have power to diſmiſſe the Church, and that with a bleſſing, *Numb.* 6.23. to 26. which is an act of ſuperioritie, *Heb.* 7.7.

6. In caſe of the Apoſtaſie of the Church, or of other notorious ſcandall committed by them, and their obſtinacie therein, the Elders have power to denounce the Iudgement of God againſt the Church, and to withdraw themſelves from it. As upon the Idolatry of the *Iſraelites*, *Moſes tooke the Tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp*, Exod. 33.7. and *Paul with Barnabas, rejected the Iewes for their blaſphemy, and turned to the Gentiles*, Act. 13.45.46.

CHAP. VI.

SECT. I.

WEE come now to the laſt part of our order, which ſtandeth in our Communion with other Churches amongſt our ſelves; though one Church claim no power, either of Ordination or Iuriſdiction, over another, (for wee know of none ſuch given us by Chriſt) yet wee maintain Brotherly communion one with another, ſo far as wee may alſo

alſo help forward our mutual communion with the Lord Ieſus. The communion of Saints is accounted an Article of the Creed: and communion of Churches is but a branch thereof. Seven waies there be, wherein we exerciſe holy communion one with another; which for diſtinction and memories ſake, we may ſumme up in ſo many ſhort names: firſt, by way of *Participation*: ſecondly, of *Recommendation*: thirdly, of *Conſultation*: fourthly, of *Congregation*: fifthly, of *Contribution*: ſixthly of *Admonition*: ſeventhly, of *Propagation* or *Multiplication of Churches.*

1. For *Participation*, we have occaſionallie ſpoken of it before, it is allowed by the conſent of our Churches; that when the members of any other Church are occaſioned to reſt with us on the Lords day, when the Supper cometh to be adminiſtred, (and neither the perſons themſelves, nor the Churches they come from, lie under any publick offence) wee do admit them to the *participation* of the Lords Table with us: For we look at the Lords Supper, not onely as a ſeal of our communion with the Lord Ieſus, but alſo of our communion with his members; and that not onely with the members of our owne Church, but of all the Churches of the Saints.

Sect. II.

BY way of *Recommendation*, we communicate one with another in this wiſe; When any of our members by occaſion of buſineſſe is called to reſide and continue for any time in another "Towne, we give him *Letters of Recommendation* unto the Church "in that place, giving teſtimonie of him as of a Brother approved, "and intreating them to receive him in the Lord, (as becommeth "Saints) unto holy Communion with them, and to *watch over him in Brotherly love, to his building up in fellowship with the Lord Ieſus*: The patterne whereof we take from *Pauls recommendation of Phebe* (a Deaconeſſe of the Church of Cenchrea) unto the Church of Rome *Rom.* 16. 1, 2. Of which Letters he maketh mention alſo to the Church of Corinth, though not as needfull for himſelf, but for others, 2 *Cor.* 3. 1. But if a brother have neceſſary occaſion to remove himſelf and his familie for altogether unto another Church, & there to take up his ſetled habitation, for the neceſſary emploiment of his

his calling, or for other juſt ends, he acquainteth the Elders of the Church, and ſome of his intimate friends and brethren, and it may be (if conveniencie permit) the whole Church with the grounds of his removall; which if they do appeare to them to be juſt and weightie, they then write more ample letters of recommendation "unto that Church in his behalf; wherein they do recommend him "wholy to their charge: now not as one of themſelves, but as one "of theirs to whom they do reſigne him, and intreat them to re-"ceive him as a Brother, beloved in the Lord, unto all thoſe "Chriſtian liberties, and holy duties, wherein they are wont to "communicate with their owne Members, unto all ſpirituall "growth in Chriſt Ieſus. Which Letters, becauſe they do ſo fully recommend a Brother unto another Church, are to diſmiſſe him from his owne; we therefore for diſtinction ſake, call them *Letters of diſmiſſion*; which indeed do not differ from the other, but that the former recommendeth him to another Church for a time, theſe for ever.

The Brother thus diſmiſſed to another Church, bringeth his Letters to the Elder of that Church, who reading them before the Church, demandeth the Churches conſent for his acceptance. If he be well knowne, and approved of them, they expreſſe their conſent, either by lifting up of hands, or by ſilence: but if the man be wholly unknowne, and doubted of by them, though they reſerve due honour to the teſtimony of the Church which ſent them, yet foraſmuch as Churches may erre ſometimes, as well in judgement of perſons, as of doctrines; (*Hanc veniam petimuſq́, damuſq́; viciſsim*) we take liberty to take ſome tryall of his ſpirit and gifts, and then either upon his juſt approbation of him, we receive him, or if we ſee juſt occaſion of offence in him, we returne him with the cauſe back again to his owne Church, who receiveth him againe into her owne fellowſhip, and takes care for his healing; for we looke at our Church-covenant, as an everlaſting covenant, *Ier.* 50. 51. And therefore though it may be tranſlated, or reſigned from one Church to another, as Gods hand ſhall direct, yet it is not to be rejected or violated by us, but onely by the members cutting off himſelfe from the fellowſhip of the Church by ſuch demerit, as expoſeth him to the juſt cenſure of Excommunication. But if a member be importunately deſirous to remove wholly from the

the Church where he is unto another, and yet the grounds of his removal ſavour of nothing, but levitie, or covetouſneſſe, or ſchiſme, or the like, according to their Covenant of brotherly love, and faithfulneſſe; the brethren of his owne Church labour to convince him of his ſinfull weakneſſe, herein to diſſwade him from his purpoſe, to which counſel, God uſually toweth his heart to ſtoop and ſubmit. But if after all their diſſwaſions, they ſhall ſee the bent of his ſpirit unremovably ſet upon removal; in ſuch a caſe, if his ſin be not apparent, and his danger imminent, they uſe indulgence towards him, as not willing to make the Church of God a priſon to any man. But when men thus depart, God uſually followeth them with a bitter curſe; either taking away their lives from them, or blaſting them with povertie, or expoſing them to ſcandal where they come, or in entertaining them with ſuch reſtleſſe agitations, that they are driven to repent of their former raſhneſſe, and many times to deſire to returne to the Church, from which they had broken away.

Sect. III.

OVr third way of communion with other Churches, is by way of *Conſultation*, whereof we have given ſome touch before; as

1. In time of the *gathering of a Church*, the Brethren who deſire to enter into Church-eſtate, do give notice to all the Churches about them, and deſire the preſence of their Elders, and of ſuch other brethren as they ſhall ſee meet to ſend to help them with their counſel, in diſcovering the ſpirits and competent gifts of ſuch members as ſhould joyne with them in that work: And further, to give counſel and direction, in the ordering of that day; as hath beene shewed above.

2. In the *choice and ordination of Officers*, one Church is wont to ſend to all the reſt about them, for ſuch Elders and Brethren as may give counſel and direction to their proceedings, and approbation of the ſame, as the matter ſhall require; as hath beene formerly delivered.

3. In caſe of *difference of judgement amongſt the Brethren of a Church, in the adminiſtration of Church-Cenſure*, and the like, to prevent all ſuſpition of partialitie or prejudice, the Church is ſome-

times occaſioned to ſend to the neighbour Churches (one or more) for the aſſiſtance of ſome of their Elders, and Brethren, to helpe them with their counſel, in diſcovering and judging of the cauſes depending amongſt them, who giving advice according to the Word, do by the bleſſings of Chriſt heal jealouſies, and compoſe differences, and ſettle peace and love amongſt them; and this alſo hath been mentioned before.

4. In doubtful caſes ariſing in the Church, whether of judgement or practice; where yet no difference hath riſen, but all or moſt are uncertain, what were fit to be done; as whether a childe may be baptized by right of his Grand-fathers Covenant, or the like; the Church doth ſomtimes ſend Letters or Meſſengers, to crave the counſel of other Churches; who deliberate by conſidering and arguing the matter, and agree upon what they conceive moſt agreeable to the Word; each Church ſendeth their judgements, and their reaſons, either by Elders, or by Meſſengers, to the Church that ſent to them.

Sect. IV.

A Fourth way of our communion with other Churches, is by way of Congregation, or gathering together many Churches, or the meſſengers of many Churches to examine and diſcuſſe, either ſome corrupt opinions or ſuſpicious practiſes, which being ſcattered and found in many Churches at once, cannot well be healed in any one alone. In which caſe the Elders of the Churches, deſirous to maintain verity, and unity of judgement in matters of doctrine, and integrity of life throughout all the Churches: doe both acquaint our Magiſtrates, being nurſing fathers to the Church, with the neceſſary occaſions and ends of a general and a ſolemne aſſembly, and do alſo ſolicite the Churches to ſend ſome fit perſons, at ſuch a time, to ſuch a Church (where the Aſſembly be moſt ſeaſonably held) to conſider and diſcerne of the matter in queſtion and agitation.

The aſſembly being met in the name of Chriſt, and his preſence called for by humble and earneſt prayer, the matters to be diſcuſſed and cleered, are propounded by ſome or other of the Elders of that Church, where we meet, or by ſome other appointed by them, and conſented to by the aſſembly.

When

When the matters are propounded, the Elders do declare their judgements of the points in order, one after another, together with their reaſons from the Word, at which time it is free for any man preſent (and all may be preſent, if they will) as well the Meſſengers of the Churches as others, (after leave orderly craved or obtained) to propound their doubts, without offence) whence diſputation doth ariſe (as in *Act.* 15. 7.) till all parties bee either ſatisfied or convinced, and ſo the matters in controverſie are cleared; and this courſe is taken for the clearing of all the points remaining, which may ſeeme to ſome not ſo fully cleared, and agreed upon, and the nature of them ſuch as may admit further diſcuſſion; yea, and difference of apprehenſion, without diſ-union of affection, or diſturbance of the Churches peace; yet for ſatisfaction of Gods people the mean while, in ſuch things each man is left to his Chriſtian libertie: So farre *as they are all come*, they judge and mind *one thing*; *If any bee otherwiſe minded, who in ſimplicitie of heart ſeeketh the truth, and in meekneſſe of wiſdome and love holdeth forth the ſame, we hope God will in time reveale the ſame unto him*: in the mean time, all agreeing in this *one*, not to *condemne*, nor to *deſpiſe one another in differences of weakneſſe*, according to the Apoſtles rule, Rom. 14. 2, 3, 4.

Sect. V.

A Fifth way of communion with other Churches, is by *contribution*, or communication in yeelding ſupply to one anothers wants: for (according to the ancient preſident, in the Primitive Churches) if any of our Brethren ſhould fall into ſuch decay as not to be able to ſupply their owne neceſſities, in outward things amongſt themſelves, we ſhould take it our bounden dutie, to miniſter to their wants according to our abilities, *Act.* 11. 29, 30. *Rom.* 15. 25, 26. Hitherto the Lord hath been pleaſed, out of his all-ſufficient goodneſſe, ſo to ſupply us all, (each Church within it ſelfe) as that wee have had ſcarce (any occaſion never but once) to exerciſe our mutuall love and liberality to one another in this kind; but if need ſhould require, we conſider afore-hand, what mutuall help God requireth of us from one towards another in ſuch a caſe.

Alſo, if any of our Churches do want ſome fit members to im-

ploy in ſome publick office amongſt them, and ſhall make known their want to ſome other Church, who may abound in ſuch bleſſings, (as ſometimes the Church at Antioch had foure or five Prophets among them, *Act.* 13. 1. when others wanted) the Church that aboundeth in ſuch helps, is ready to ſend and commend ſuch of their members as their ſelves may ſpare, and are fit for office, (but not called to office amongſt themſelves) to ſupply the neceſſities of their Brethren.

Sect. VI.

A Sixth way of communion amongſt our Churches, is by way of *admonition*: as if one Church ſhould be credibly given to underſtand, of ſome ſcandall ariſing in another Church, whether by *corruption in Doctrine*, or *in manners*; and upon diligent ſearch and inquirie, the report is found true; the Church hearing thereof, ſendeth Letters, or Meſſengers, or both, unto the Elders of that Church, where ſuch offence is found, and exhorteth them to take a ſpeedy and diligent courſe for the redreſſe thereof; but if the Elders of that Church ſhould be remiſſe therein (or bee faultie themſelves) they then certifie the whole Church thereof, to call upon their officers, as *Paul* ſent to the Church of Coloſſe, to call upon *Archippus*, to take diligent heed to the fulfilling of that work of the Miniſterie, which hee had received of the Lord, (*Col.* 4. 17.) If the Church heare them, the ſcandall is removed; if it heare them not, the Church offended herewith, taketh the helpe of two or three Churches more to joyne with them in their exhortation, or admonition.

If ſtill the Church where the offence lieth, perſiſteth in the neglect of their duty, and of the counſell of their Brethren; either the matter would be referred to a *Congregation of many, or all the Churches together*; (if need ſhould require) or elſe, if the offence be evident and weightie, and of ill, though not generall conſequence, the Churches offended with them would (as juſtly they might) withdraw themſelves from the right hand of fellowſhip, and ſo forbeare all ſuch exerciſes of mutuall brotherly communion with them, which all the Churches of Chriſt are wont to walke in one towards another.

We have never yet been put to the utmoſt extent of this duty towards

wards any of our Churches: The Lord hitherto ſo farre preventing with his grace, that no Church hath ſtood out ſo long in maintaining any offence found amongſt them: But if it ſhould ſo fall out, (which God forbid) wee looke at it as our dutie to bee faithfull, one Church to another, in like ſort as the Brethren of the ſame Church are called to be faithfull one towards another; Doe not Churches injoy brotherly Communion one with another, as well as brethren of the ſame Church? The Church in the *Canticles* tooke care, not onely for her owne members, but for her little ſiſter, which had no breaſts, *Cant.* 8.8. And would ſhe have taken no care of having her breaſts healed, if her breaſts had been diſtempered and given corrupt milk? The Apoſtles had a publick care (by vertue of their office) of all the Churches, 2 *Cor.* 11.28. And is the publick ſpirit of grace and love dead with them? ought not all the Churches of Chriſt, to have a care and watchfull eye over the publick good of one another? Though not *virtute officii*, yet *intuitu charitatis*.

Sect. VII.

THe ſeventh and laſt way of the Communion of our Churches, is by way of *propagation*, or multiplication of Churches; Though this was a peculiar eminencie of the Apoſtolicke calling for them in their life-times to travell into all Nations to preach the Goſpel, to beget Diſciples, to gather them into Church-eſtate, and ſo to plant Churches whereſoever they came: yet that which they did by vertue of their office, is reſerved unto the Churches of Chriſt, to proſecute and carry along (according to their meaſure) throughout all generations, and in all Nations, for the inlargement of the kingdome of Chriſt, unto the end of the world.

The power of the keys, which was immediately given by Chriſt unto his Apoſtles, is alſo given by Chriſt unto all the Churches, in that fullneſſe of meaſure, which the eſtabliſhment and enlargement of Chriſts kingdome doth require.

If then any particular Church of Chriſt ſhall come in proceſſe of time to be ſo farre multiplyed, as that like Bees when the hive is too full they are neceſſarily occaſioned to ſwarme forth (as it is indeed the caſe when the voice of their Miniſters cannot reach to all)

all) in ſuch, or in the like caſe, the Church ſurcharged with multitude, may ſend forth ſundry of their members, fit for the purpoſe, to enter into a Church-eſtate amongſt themſelves; or if a number of godly Chriſtians ſhall come over into a Countrey, where they finde the Churches ſo full, that they cannot with conveniencie joyne with them, the Church may comfortably encourage them, to enter into holy Covenant amongſt themſelves. They may alſo commend both unto the one Companie, and unto the other, ſuch able gifted men, whom they may fitly chooſe, to be Miniſters and Officers to them, and both then when they enter into Covenant, and gather into Church-eſtate, (as hath been ſhewed in the beginning) as alſo when they goe about to chooſe and ordaine Church-Officers amongſt themſelves, the Churches already eſtabliſhed ought to be ready to helpe them, with their preſence, counſell, and aſſiſtance, ſo farre as ſhall bee found requiſite for the propagation and enlargement of the kingdome of Chriſt, in the multiplication of Churches according to the order of the Goſpel.

Thus have wee given unto all our holy Brethren, throughout the Churches of our Lord Ieſus, a juſt and true account of all our proceedings in Church-affaires; ſo farre as concerneth our way and order amongſt our ſelves. If wee fall ſhort of the Rule, in ſome thing or other goe aſtray, it is our humble and earneſt requeſt unto all our godly learned Brethren, that they will bee pleaſed, *Erranti comiter monſtrare viam*; but if the way wee walk in be found upon ſerious and mature conſideration, to bee agreeable to the rules of the Goſpel (as wee verily beleeve it is) let all the upright in heart be intreated, in the name of the Lord Ieſus, not to judge or ſpeake evill of the wayes of Chriſt before his people; But rather ſeeke how to addreſſe themſelves, and to call on others to walke in the ſtraight ſteps of the Lord Ieſus, in the kingdome of his grace, till we ſhall all come to meete him in the kingdome of his glorie.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the way of Reformation of the Congregations in England.

Sect. 1.

WE take not upon us as ἀλλοτριεπισκοποι, to preſcribe unto our Brethren in England, (men of their Churches, (and eminent lights in the world) what courſe to take in purſuing and perfecting the great work of Reformation in England; Nay, we know our owne Tenuity, and the ſtore of buſineſſe enough, which we have to attend unto neer home: Nevertheleſſe, as we cannot ceaſe to pray for, and ſeek their good as our owne: ſo we cannot but rejoyce with them to behold that open door which God hath ſet before them, and wiſh that all their hearts were ſo far enlarged towards the Lord, and to his waies, as we hear his hand is enlarged towards them. Onely being abſent in body, but preſent in ſpirit, we crave leave to bear witneſſe to them, and with them; That if the Lord be pleaſed to proſper his worke amongſt them, it is poſſible to reduce the eſtate of the Congregations in England, to ſuch a reformation, as is ſutable to the patterne revealed in the Goſpel, according to the way of Primitive ſimplicity, deſcribed above.

Four things we obſerve in the eſtate of the Churches in England, which make way for Reformations amongſt them.

Firſt, The efficient inſtruments of their firſt plantation, which were either Apoſtles or Apoſtolical men, whether *Philip*, or *Ioſeph* of *Arimathea*, or *Simon Zelotes*, as any of our Countrymen may reade in M. *Foxes* booke of *Acts and Monuments*, in the beginning of it, next after the ſtory of the ten Primitive Perſecutions, out of *Gildas*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Beda*, *Nicephorus*. Which being ſo, we cannot but conceive the Churches in England were rightly gathered, and planted according to the Rule of the Goſpel; and all the corruptions found in them ſince, have ſprung from Popiſh Apoſtaſie in ſucceeding ages, and from want of through and perfect purging out of that leaven in the late times of Reformation in the daies of our Fathers. So that all the worke now is, not to make them

them Churches, which were none before, but to reduce and reſtore them to their Primitive Inſtitution.

Secondly, The publick Service-book acknowledgeth, That in the "Primitive Church there was a godly Diſcipline; That notorious "ſinners were put to open penance, and punished in this world; "that both their ſoules might be ſaved in the day of the Lord, and "others admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to "offend. Which godly Diſcipline, is a thing (ſaith the Book) much to be deſired, that it might be reſtored again. See the beginning of the *Comminations againſt ſinners*. It is therefore acknowledged by the very ſtate of the Churches of England, that the preſent eſtate of Church diſcipline is not perfect, but defective, and ſwerving from the Primitive godly diſcipline.

Thirdly, In the *publick Rubrick* before the *Catechiſme*, it is ordered, "That when children come to years of diſcretion, and have learn-"ed what others promiſed for them in Baptiſme, they should then "themſelves with their own mouth, and with their owne conſent, "openly before the Church ratifie and confirm the ſame: And alſo "promiſe, that by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavour "themſelves, faithfully to obſerve and keep ſuch things as by their "own mouth and confeſſion they have aſſented to. Which courſe the Booke in a few words after, acknowledgeth to be agreeable with the uſage of the Church of times paſt, That children coming to perfect age, having been inſtructed in Chriſtian Religion, should openly profeſſe their own faith, and promiſe to be obedient to the will of God. Which direction (if it were as dulie obſerved, as it is expreſly ordered) doth plainly hold forth, that the Church of *England* (as they call it) doth not acknowledg any to be confirmed members of the Church, and ſo unfit to partake of the Lords Supper, till they have expreſſie confeſſed their faith openly before the Church, and promiſed obedience to the will of God. Which if it be ſeriouſly done, and not perfunctorily, is ſomewhat of like nature with our receiving of members into the Church, and joyning them by Covenant.

Fourthly, In the *Exhortation* before the *Communion*, the Miniſter "is directed to denounce unto the people, That if any of them be "a blaſphemer of God, an hinderer or ſlanderer of his Word, "an adulterer, or be in malice, or envie, or in any other grievous "crime,

" crime, they ſhould bewaile their ſinnes, and not come to that " holy Table, leſt after the taking of that Sacrament, the Devill " enter into them, as he entred into *Judas*, &c. Which plainly argueth, they would allow no ſcandalous perſon to partake in the Communion of the Lords Table: All theſe things preſuppoſed, really performed, and ſeriouſly attended to, might open a doore to ſundry paſſages of a more full and perfect Reformation.

Sect. II.

Tendering certaine Propoſitions tending to the Reformation of the Churches in England.

Propoſ. 1. WHere godly Miniſters be already planted in any Congregations, let them (with due encouragement from the State) call the people to ſolemne humiliation before the Lord for their own ſins, & thoſe of their fathers they have imitated. So did *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, with the Levites and Prieſts, and upon the like occaſions, *Nehem.* 9. 2. 2, 3, 4. & *Ezra* 10. 1, 2. 9, 10. For though the Parliament, & the whole Kingdome have *proteſted*, and *Covenanted* Reformation for the time to come, yet they have cauſe alſo to be humbled, and that throughly for the time paſt.

2. Let ſuch of the people, as are of good knowledge in the waies of God, and of approved converſation, take up that courſe which the Service-book (as hath been ſaid) giveth an hint of; *Renue their Covenant formerly made in Baptiſme, profeſſing their faith and repentance, and promiſing Reformation of life, not onely in their private converſation, but alſo in their publique Communion in the Church of God, yeelding profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt in the fellowſhip of all his holy Ordinances.*

3. Let no Miniſter, that loves the Lord Jeſus better then his own belly, ſtand upon his *advocation* from his *Patron*, but rather expect his *vocation from his people*.

4. For this end let every Patron reſtore his *jus patronatus* to the Church. Or if it ſeem too hard a thing for them to part ſo freely with their freehold, (though they ought freely to give unto Chriſt, who have received freely from him) the Parliament may be pleaſed to give them a competent part of the revenues of the Benefice,

(as they call it) and annex it to their owne private inheritance, reſerving ſo much to the uſe of the Church, as may ſtrengthen their hands in a ſufficient maintenance of their Miniſtery; for though *things dedicated to ſacred uſe, cannot be alienated, or diverted to private uſe without ſacriledge*, yet that holdeth in ſuch things as are ſo dedicated to ſacred uſe, *as that the Lord accepteth as ſacred to himſelfe*: But God no where in the New Teſtament, hath expreſſed his acceptance, or allowance of lands, dedicated to the miniſtery, but onely to the ſervice of the whole Church, and then for the Churches ſervice they may be diſpoſed of by their conſent; as ſometimes the Kings and Princes of *Iſrael* gave away the treaſures of the Temple, to ſave themſelves from captivity, 2 *King.* 18. 15,16.

5. The people having called or choſen their Miniſter (one or more) unto office in a day of humiliation, let them in the preſence of the Miniſters of other Churches depute ſome of the graveſt and godly members of the Church, to lay their hands upon him, with prayer over him in the name of the Lord, ſetting him apart to that office. The whole Congregation are ſaid to *anoint Zadok* to the office of an *high Prieſt*, as well as *Solomon to be King*, 1 Chron. 29. 22. Which is a ſacred right, as Impoſition of hands; and this the whole body of them could not doe, but by deputing ſome eminent perſons amongſt them to the performance thereof: But after they be furniſhed with *Elders*, (a *Presbytery* of their owne) let Impoſition of hands be given by them (according to 1 *Tim.* 4.14.) to ſuch as for the future ſhall be ordained.

6. For the making up of a *Presbytery*, inſtead of *Parſon* and *Vicar*, (wherewith ſome Congregations are endowed) let them chooſe *Paſtors* and *Teachers*; and *Ruling Elders*, inſtead of thoſe who crept into their room, *viz.* the *Church Wardens*, and *Sideſmen*. But let them chooſe and ordaine them in a day of humiliation (according to *Acts* 14.23.) and not for a yeare onely, but during life; and let the *Presbyteries* of all neighbour Churches, take all opportunities to make uſe one of another, for brotherly conſultation, but not for Juriſdiction, and Authority one over another. And inſtead of *Collectors* or *Overſeers* for the poore (who crept into the room of *Deacons*) let *Deacons* be choſen as hath beene ſhewed above; but not as members of the *Presbytery*.

7. For

7. For ſet formes of prayer, or preſcript Liturgies, let them not be enjoyned unto the Miniſters of the Churches; but let the *Mi*niſters as well give up themſelves wholly unto prayer, as to the Miniſtery of the Word, *Act.6.4.*

8. Baptiſme may orderly be adminiſtred to the children of ſuch parents, as have profeſſed their faith and repentance before the Church, as above. Or where either of the parents have made ſuch profeſſion; or it may be conſidered alſo whether the children may not be baptized, where either the grand-father or grand-mother have made ſuch profeſſion, and are ſtill living to undertake for the Chriſtian education of the childe; for it may be conceived where there is a ſtipulation of the Covenant on Gods part, and a reſtipulation on mans part, there may be an obligation of the Covenant on both parts, *Gen.17.7.* Or if theſe faile, what hindereth, but that if the parents will reſigne their infant to be educated in the houſe of any godly member of the Church, the childe may be lawfully baptized in the right of its houſhold Governour, according to the proportion of the law, *Gen.17.12,13.*

9. Let the Lords Supper be adminiſtred onely to ſuch, as have ſo profeſſed their faith and repentance publiquely, and are received and approved members of the Church, endued with ſufficient knowledge, to examine themſelves, and to diſcerne the Lords body: free from ſcandall, and of good converſation.

10. Let Officers in the Church be redreſſed, and removed, not by preſentments to Officers of other Churches, but according to the order of the Goſpell, deſcribed above, *Chap.5.ſect.1,2,3.*

11. Where the Miniſters of the Congregation are ignorant or ſcandalous, meet it is that they were removed, and better choſen in their roome by the people; according to the counſell & direction of the godly Miniſters and brethren of neighbour Churches, *Hoſ.4.6.*

12. Where the people in a Congregation are generally ignorant and profane, it were neceſſary godly Preachers were ſent forth with countenance from the King and State, to preach unto them, till they were brought on to knowledge, and to ſome meaſure of gracious reformation. Thus *Jehoſaphat* ſent forth Prieſts and Levites, to teach in the Cities of *Judah*, and certaine Princes and Nobles with them, to countenance the good worke in their hands. 2 *Chron.17.7,8,9.*

13. Till the people be in ſome ſort duly prepared, and growne up to ſome meaſure of knowledge, and grace, it were neither meet to receive them to a renewing of their Covenant formerly made at their Baptiſme, or to the ſeales of it. But after they have beene wrought upon by the Miniſtery of the word, *to lament after the Lord*; as the *Iſraelites* did when the Arke had been long abſent from them, 1 *Sam.*7.29. then let them proceed as other godly Chriſtians were directed to doe, *Propoſ.*2,3.&c. for *renewing* of their *Covenant*, for *choice of their Miniſters*, and *Officers*, and for *Communication* in all the liberties of the Church of God.

14. For the helpe of the Univerſities (of the whole Kingdome, and of all the Churches in it) it were neceſſary, that ſome experienced, godly, learned, Noble and Miniſters, were deputed, to viſite and reforme the Univerſities; That ſubſcriptions to Ceremonies and preſcript Liturgies were removed; That degrees in Divinitie were not abuſed unto qualifications for pluralities, and non-reſidency, nor allowed in the Miniſters of Churches, to put a difference between brethren of the ſame calling, whence Chriſt hath removed it, *Mat.* 23.8,9,10. The καθηγητὴς there mentioned, is not to be tranſlated *Maſter*; for it is a Title common to all Miniſters, but Doctors; and the Academicall title of Doctors, is fitter for Maſters of Colledges & Readers in the Schooles, then for Church-officers. Here alſo ſpeciall care would be taken for ſetting up of ſuch Preachers in both the Univerſities, as whoſe ſpirit, and gift, and Miniſtery, might be examplary patterns to young Students.

15. For the effectuall and orderly expedition and tranſaction of all theſe things, it were requiſite, that as King *Jehoſaphat* did, ſo the King and State ſhould depute ſome choice perſons to do the ſame, to wit, to goe throughout all the Kingdome, to ſee the people returned, and all the Churches reſtored to a true ſtate and courſe of Reformation, 2 *Chron.* 19.4.

All which things are humbly preſented by us, not as if we would undertake to give Counſell to them that are wiſer then our ſelves, much leſſe, Injunctions; But as Subjects who deſire to approve our faithfull ſervice to the Lord, and our King and Countrey, hold them forth as true Conſectaries from the Rules of the Goſpell, which ſhould rule us all.

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